CU ummmm good!

DECEMBER 1987

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COIN-OPS OF '88 REPORT FROM JAPAN

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REVIEWED: STAR WARS • P.H.M. PEGASUS • RYGAR • SKATE OR DIE • COSMIC CAUSWAY • GARRISON


You're cool, the engine's hot, the girl's gorgeous, a tank full of gas and an open road.... the rest is up to you..!
Out Run™
Screenshot from Amstrad version.
Screenshot from CBM 64/128 version.
START
Screenshot from Spectrum version.
Screenshot from Atari ST version.
JPQ



The ultimate experience in motor sports simulation, the absolute challenge to nerve and reflexes. Feel the wind in your hair and the pull of the G-force as you power your way along the highways and byeways, a girl by your side, and open country before you. Experience the exhilaration and excitement of driving a high performance sports car in this teasing time trial where your co-ordination and nerve will be tested to unbelievable limits. Out Run the coin op starred as an arcade sensation. Out Run the computer simulation mirrors this exciting all action spectacle.
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INCLUDES ORIGINAL 'Sound Track' FROM COIN OP VERSION
The mache becomes a home computer reity on December 10th.*
*Atari ST version will be available later in December.
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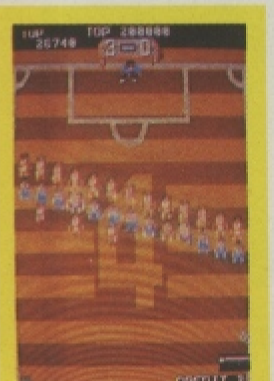
Combat School

DECEMBER

SPECIALS



Free Kick



ED'S BIT ON THE SIDE

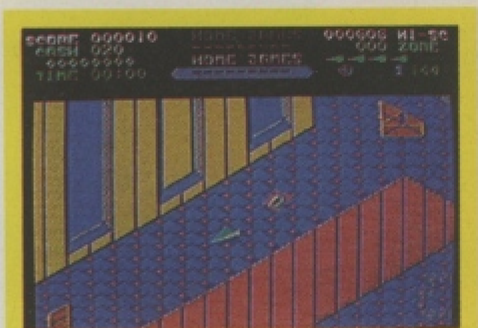
It's taken a long time. Three years to be precise. But now that it's happend it makes all the waiting seem more than worthwhile. I refer of course to the sudden rush of excellent Amiga games. You will notice more and more Amiga games in CU — they are just too good to ignore. This month we bring you the first reviews of *Western Games* and *Garrison*. I believe that the quality of these games speaks for themselves and ends the debate over what is the better machine the ST or the Amiga. CU will not be sitting on the 16 bit fence, we will be supporting the Amiga as we feel this is clearly the best machine. But don't let all this talk of Amigas give you the impression that 64 owners are going to lose out in any way. We have stacks in store for you including another two great free gifts on the front cover of Jan and Feb's issues. You are holding the best value in gamesdom — 163 pages plus a 24 page supplement for a pound. I ask you does any other magazine come close?

SCREEN SCENE









Zig Zag

Garrison — Amiga *Gauntlet* clone



Dark Castle — US hit launched on Amiga.



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Cover Illustration — Steve Gulbis.

64,606
Jan-Jun 1987

ABC
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BUZZ

RAMPAGE

Phew! After all those press releases full of bumpf about superaquamarine megawacko jets, fiendish plots to take over the world using germ bombs and everything you never wanted to know about the internal combustion engine, its quite a relief to be able to write about an unpretentious, simple-minded game. In *Rampage*, you play a monster who, for absolutely no reason whatsoever, decides to demolish entire cities building by building, and has no objection to eating a few soldiers while he's at it. There are even a couple of other monsters who can be challenged and beaten to a pulp. Yes, this Activision conversion of the arcade classic will appeal to anybody who's partial to the occasional hefty dollop of utterly mindless violence and destruction.





RASTAN SAGA

PHWTHWAACCCCCKKKK! Is it the Big Ed finally losing the last of his marbles and dropping his typewriter from the fifteenth-floor of his luxury penthouse window? Or Mike Pattenden exacting swift and terrible retribution from an unfortunate contributor who's just split his last infinitive? No, it's *Rastan Saga* cutting a swathe through the forest of naff software which will be cluttering up the shop shelves over the coming weeks. When we had the coin-op in our office a month or two back it had to be locked away to keep the staff off it. The Ocean conversion of this brilliant sword-fighting game should be hitting the streets before Christmas, so don't say we didn't warn you.



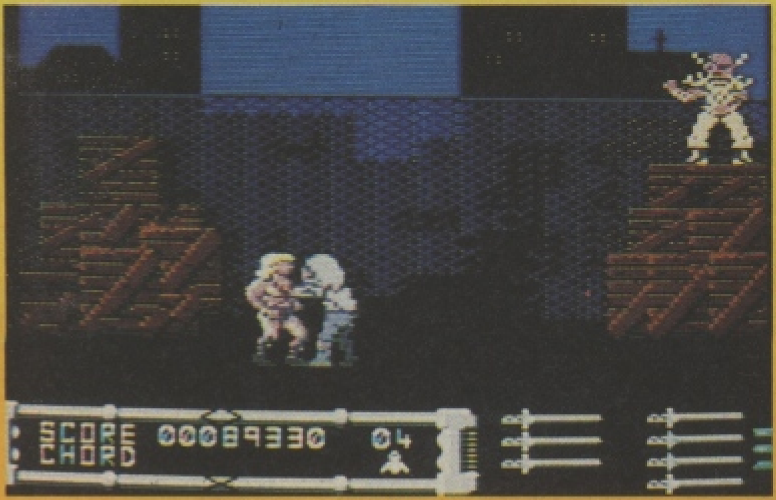
OUT RUN

Here it comes! The most hyped drivealong of all time! The conversion of the millenium! Yes, it's *Out Run*, screeching to a halt outside your local softshop just in time for the Spend, Spend, Spend season. No, you won't be getting a seven foot-long hydraulic console, but the original's hippy-dippy soundtrack will be included in the package on a separate audio tape for you to play on your stereo while cruisin' along in your automobile. Converted from the year's most popular coin-op and benefitting from all the publicity and column inches that software giants US Gold can generate, *Out Run* has to be the surest tip for Christmas No1 there's been for yonks. The tills start ringing on December 10th.



JACK THE RIPPER

In 1888 there was a series of grisly murders in the Whitechapel area of London. All the victims were prostitutes and all were disfigured in a manner that suggested that the killer had had professional experience of using surgical implements. Rumours as to the identity of the murderer were numerous — one held that "Jack" was in fact in some way connected to the Royal Family — but the crimes were never solved. Now, on the centenary of the atrocities CRL are releasing *Jack The Ripper*, programmed by a mysterious duo of women known collectively as St Brides, in which you play a wrongly accused suspect who sets out searching for clues as to the identity of the true killer in order to clear his name. The graphics are, as you can see, suitably grisly, and no doubt CRL, fresh from their success at having *Frankenstein* X-rated by the Censorship Board, will be attempting to achieve the same money-earning notoriety with this bloodcurdling little program.

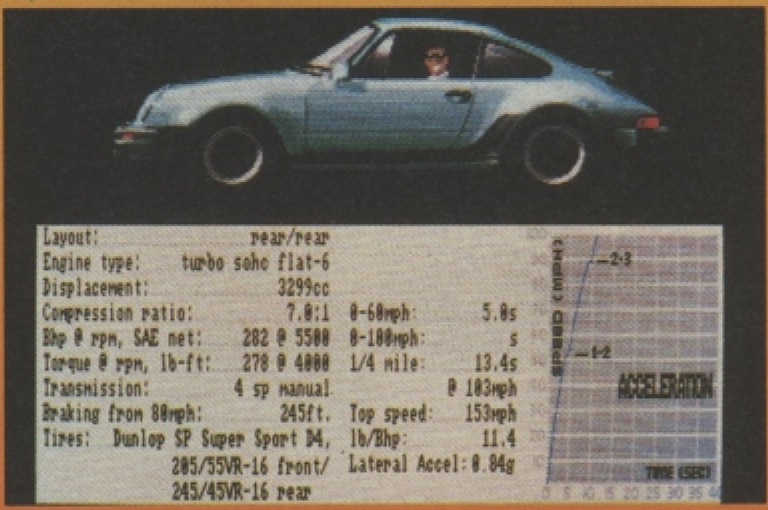


MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE

"Masters of the Universe?" We hear you cry incredulously, "surely that's *ages* old, why we seem to remember a CU front cover on it way back in February. . . " No, no, you fools, not the hoary old US Gold game based on the *TV series* of the comic of the toys but Gremlin's brand spanking newie based on the forthcoming *Masters of The Universe Film* due out just before Christmas. Shrewdly timed to coincide with its silver screen counterpart's arrival, *MOTU* finds you, He-Man, and your faithful friends Gwilder, Teela and Man-At-Arms attempting to find the eight pieces that make up the Cosmic Key. You'll have to take on certain dangerous missions to get some of the pieces, but there's no alternative: only with the full key can you get to challenge the supreme nasty Skeletor, and only when *he's* been vanquished will the gentle Sorceress of Greyskull Castle be released, thereby enabling everybody to live happily ever after.

TEST DRIVE

Life is not fair. There you are, probably the most suave sophisticated and impossibly sexy young person in the civilised world. But who gets to drive the neighbourhood's only Ferrari Testarossa? Nigel Montmorency-Dingbatt, the ageing and utterly charmless chartered accountant, that's who, while you, owing to the small matter of having to survive on thirteen pence a week, are condemned to the squalor and indignity of the number 47 bus. But grieve no more! For those egalitarian-minded folk at Electronics Arts have decided that *everybody* should be able to experience the thrill of driving a really swish motor (well, everybody who owns a 64 or an Amiga anyway). *Test Drive* is a sim which slings you into the luxurious seats of such fab machines as the Testarossa and the Lambourghini Countach, negotiating sections of road within both the given time limit and the Road Traffic Acts. So now maybe you won't have to start the revolution after all. . .





MARS COPS

It's 2029, and you are a Mars Cop, one of the crack team whose primary duty is to protect the growing colony of scientists and engineers on the Red Planet. Of late hostile alien spaceships have been getting a little too close for comfort and now you've been ordered into your trusty starfighter to chase and destroy these pesky extraterrestrial intruders. You must pursue the enemy one at a time, and your armaments will have to be very carefully used if your mission is to be successful. Although you've got a lazer which can be used to blast the meteorites that come between you and your prey, it won't destroy the aliens themselves, but merely temporarily stun them. Nope, what you've got to use in order to dis them greenies is one deadly rocket. Waste, it, and your foe escapes. Either way, you'll still have to make your way home, through hazardous dust storms and various other natural obstacles to be found in the region. *Mars Cops*, by Arcana Softeware for the Amiga, is due for release any minute now.



PLATOON

Based on the harrowing and critically-acclaimed movie about the realities of war in Vietnam for soldiers in the field, Ocean's *Platoon* promises to be more than yer common-or-garden blast-or-be-blasted. You are in control of a platoon of five men, working your way through a bewildering maze of jungle tracks and underground tunnels, searching hostile villages, bunkers and the oppressive tropical terrain. The object of your search is the renegade Sergeant Barnes, a former platoon member gone bad. Needless to say, you encounter a host of snipers and cunningly hidden guerillas en route. Without quick reactions and a good sense of direction you're not going to make it through to the sixth level and your quarry. January will see *Platoon's* release on the 64.

BUZZ


H A GREMLIN GAME!!
CBM 64/128
£9.99 C £14.99 D
AMSTRAD
£9.99 C £14.99 D
SPECTRUM
£7.99 C
COMPENDIUM
COMPENDIUM
Wacky, Wacky, Wacky is the best way to describe this adaption of the traditional board games compendium. Your hosts are the Winks, father Tiddly Wink and his wife, Mavis Wink. Up to four players can compete by taking the role of either one of the Wink children, the baby or the Wink dog. Play Snakes and Hazzards where real snakes wriggle across the board, or the pub game where a rather drunk Tiddly Wink flips his beer glasses in the air for the rest of his long suffering family to catch! Old favourites Ludo and Bingo are not forgotten in this hilarious game for one to four players.
BLOOD VALLEY
Archveult the hideous and mighty leader of the Firedrake has decreed that you must be hunted down like an animal and brought to sentence. Your only chance of survival is to escape the valley. Do you have the will and resourcefulness to succeed not only against your opponent but the creatures and eerie beings of the fantasy world of Orb as well. Based on the Duelmaster series of fantasy books by Mark Smith and Jamie Thompson, authors of The Way of the Tiger.
Blood Valley
CBM 64/128
£9.99 C £14.99 D
AMSTRAD
£9.99 C
£14.99 D
SPECTRUM
£7.99 C
ATARI ST
£19.99
XPERIENCE GREMLIN

Bono in computer game shock?

It can't be true! Surely the world's most famous Irishman hasn't interrupted his fab beat combo Yew Too's universe tour to star in a humble *computer game???* No, we couldn't belive it either when we received Superior Software's release: "Bono", it began, "an enterprising little dragon, had opened a bath house for the monsters who lurk in the stagnant waters of the deepest parts of the sea."

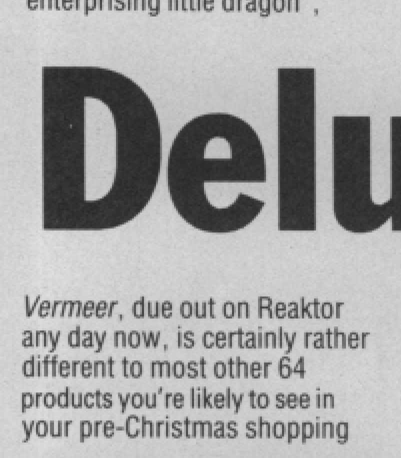
Well, we mean to say, that's not cricket! Imagine calling the world's most tremendously talented human being "an enterprising little dragon", especially when he's taken time off from being one of the megafamous creators of "The Banyan Tree" or whatever it's called to appear in your new game. And what's this about him going everywhere with his faithful friend and ally, *Fozzy*??!?? I mean, we know Adam's quite woolly and not so bright but he's quite easily distinguishable from the Muppet Show Bear! And what do you mean by calling the game *"Bonecruncher"*??? Is this supposed to be some kind of sick joke??? Well, scandalous, that't what we'd call it. . .oh?

What's that? It's not really anything to do with U2? And the fact that the main character is called Bono is merely a weird "coincidence"? But what are we going to do with this brand new copy of their spanking new "official" autobiography "The Unforgettable Fire" which has just fallen into our hands? *(Why don't you just give it to the first reader who can tell you Bono's real name and give the next five each a copy of the game and then maybe everybody'll stop prattling on about U2 around here and we can get some work done-Ed)* Oh, Jolly good. Postcards please to *Unforgettable Compo*, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, to arrive no later than December 31st.



Deluxe paintings

Vermeer, due out on Reaktor any day now, is certainly rather different to most other 64 products you're likely to see in your pre-Christmas shopping expedititions.



Nope, there's no galactic warfare, hand-to-hand combat or martial arts here and it dosen't even seem to have so much as a sniff of a platform about it.

Vermeer, you see, is chiefly concerned with the buying and selling of aged paintings. It seems that millionaire art magnate Sir Oliver Burroughs has had his entire, nearly-priceless collection pinched. The reason we say "nearly" is that your mission is, amongst other things, to buy back all the paintings in the collection — when you can find them, and more importantly, afford them. For poor old Burroughs, stricken with grief, has stood down from the leadership of his corporation, and you compete with up to three other players to be the one to take it over. You achieve this by doing all sorts of daring international trading deals, thereby generating plenty of dosh which you then spend stocking up the depleted Burroughs gallery. Every so often you'll get a chance to buy back one of the stolen paintings which has come back on the market, but beware — there are plenty of forgeries out there and the wrong decision could cost you a lot of dosh, and the game. With dozens of deals, shady and otherwise, to be done, *Vermeer* should teach you a thing or two about the world of high finance. And with lotsa genuine old masters to be learnt about and acquired, who says you don't get oodles of kultshure on your trusty 64?



Virgin buys into Mastertronic

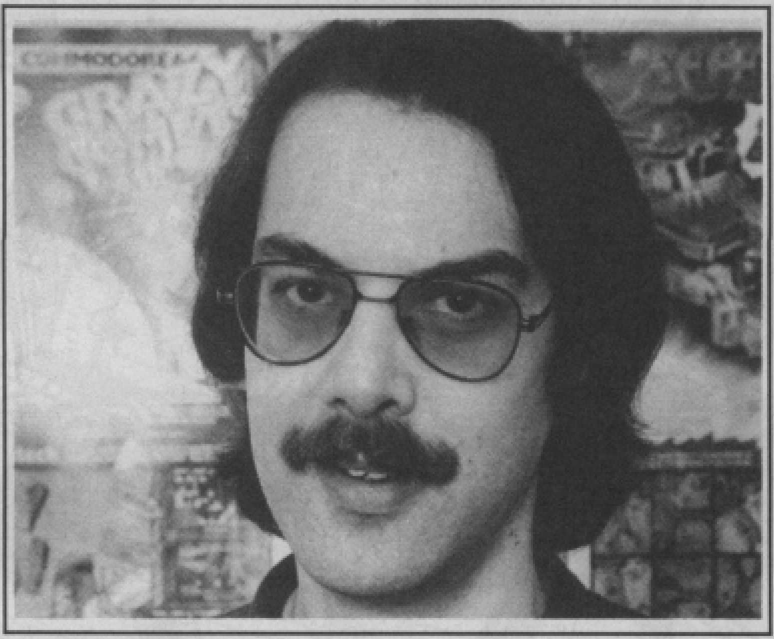
The software diversion of "Rich" *Dicky Branson*'s empire has just announced their acquisition of 45% of top-selling buget software house Mastertronic. Apparently the shares were previously held by "sleeping shareholders".

"The decision was made to change that situation" explained Mastertronic's Jeff Heath, "and that shareholding has been taken up by Virgin. Virgin haven't taken us over or anything like that — the majority shareholders still control the company."

Nevertheless Virgin Publishing will now have two members on the board of directors including their Managing Director Nick Alexander, which will undoubtedly give them a great deal of influence over company decisions.

There are, according to Heath, no current plans to combine the output of Mastertronic and Virgin's own label, but Heath did allow that "obviously in the course of time we may be looking at things like duplication, distribution and printing."

BUZZ



Rob out — Martin?

Music programmers Rob Hubbard and Martin Galway are set to swop musical roles with Hubbard going in-house and Galway turning freelance.

Hubbard looks set to be joining up with the Electronic Arts team full-time, thereby leaving a yawning gap in the market for really good freelance software tunesmiths. While refusing to confirm that a final deal had been struck, EA's Mark Lewis told Buzz that Hubbard and themselves were currently "negotiating towards establishing a long term relationship" with one another.

Meanwhile Galway, nephew of Irish whistleman James and in-house music maker for Ocean Software, is set to leave the company. Wily Martin, perhaps sensing that Rob might soon be vacating the prestigious centre-stage slot he's held for so long, has recently decided to go freelance, thereby leaving himself open to offers of work from desperate software houses looking for somebody to take Rob's place.

Martin is currently working on three different Ocean games — *Rastan Saga, Combat School* and *Gryzor* — which should keep him busy for some months to come, but with Electronic Arts likely to be keeping Rob jealously to themselves it looks like Martin may be finding himself very much in demand, which is good for him but could prove unlucky for his former employers.



Halo Jones snapped up by Piranha

Piranha Software have just signed the licence to produce a game based on *The Ballad Of Halo Jones,* the fab comic strip by Allan Moore. *Halo Jones* is the second *2000AD* character to be signed up by Piranha — their *Judge Death* game should be hitting the streets any day now.

Quite how Moore's masterful creation will transfer to the screens of the nation's 64s is uncertain. *Halo Jones* is an unusual strip in that its main character is a woman — and even more unusual in that she's neither a wimpy cutsie who giggles and faints her way through life, nor a Grace Jones eat-photon-death-sucker lookalike mutant.

She's simply an ordinary young woman trapped in a huge artificial city called The Hoop somewhere in the dim and distant future, a place and time by turns brutal and dreary, horrifying and humdrum. *The Ballad Of Halo Jones* is the story of her day to day struggle to survive and her eternal desire to leave.

BUZZ

Loriciels launch: Top French software house Loriciels have recently announced their intention to release their games in the UK, with distribution being handled by Elite. Their first product to hit Britain's shop shelves will be _Grand Prix 500cc_, a motor cycle racing game which should be available early next year.

Defender taped: Mirrorsoft have just released the Amiga and C64 hit _Defender Of The Crown_ on tape. As the game originates in the US of A where everybody is lucky enough to own a disc drive, the initial release was only for disk, but Mirrorsoft have recently managed to cram this very large game onto two cassettes — no mean feat, they assure us — which will retail for the princely sum of £12.95.

Driller due: Incentive's much-hyped _Driller_ looks set for release in January. This space-mission game features a new "solid three dimensional environment simulator" called Freescape which apparently provides amazing 3-D solid graphics, as opposed to the usual vector graphics with their "line drawing" effect. The game has eighteen sections which according to Incentive, can each allow for _20,000 billion_ screens. Phew!

T-Running: Also on the horizon for early 1988 is Nexus' _T-Runner_ in which you play the intrepid Captain Skellery who, by some strange set of circumstances, finds himself being chased around a disused Deep Space Marines training course by fierce and virtually indestructible Rover Balls.

BUZZ

REVIEWERS CHOI

What games have the CU crew being playing this mont
EUGENE LACEY: Combat School, Carrison, Vauxhall C er.
MIKE PATTENDEN: Operation Wolf, Space Invaders (W!?), Co
NICK KELLY: King of Chicago, Free Kick, Barry White w 'un
MARK PATTERSON: Russia, Solomon's Key, Western es.

Well Amigos you have read a number of scoop Amiga reviews in CU and now we are pleased to announce another first – the first Amiga Games Top Ten.

Courtesy of Gallup the Top Ten features a number of games recommended already in CU. The top slot goes to Impact from Audiogenic – an Arkanoid style game. This demonstrates Amiga owners hunger for good coin-ops to play on their wonder machine. And who can blame them – so far being starved on a diet of strategy and adventure.

The 64 chart is again dominated by budget titles — with Firebird's Arcade Classics claiming the number one slot. Lets hope the game charts are not going the same way as the pop ones — with nostalgia rules being the watch word for all new releases. I mean a few games of Invaders for old time sake is all very well but just how far are the software boys going to take this? I don't fancy going back to those bat and ball games that you used to get free with your latest 22 inch from Redifusion.



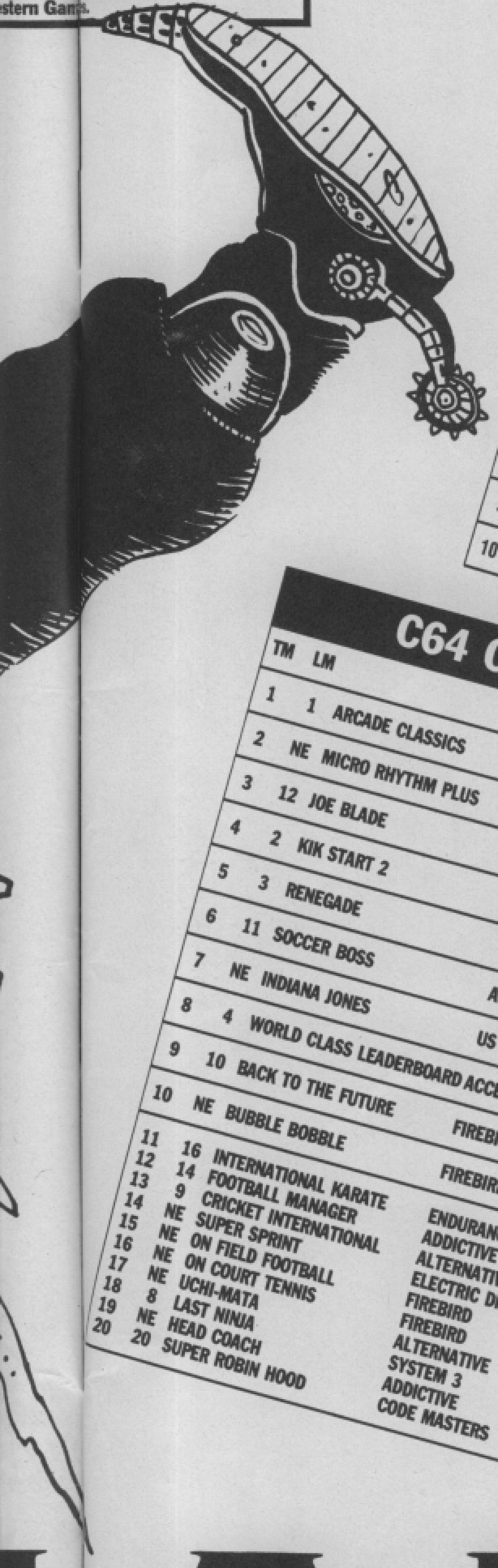
TOP TEN 'NAM FILMS

1) APOCOLYPSE NOW
2) THE DEERHUNTER
3) SOUTHERN COMFORT
4) FULL METAL JACKET
5) PLATOON
6) COMING HOME
7) HAMBURGER HILL
8) BAT 21
9) RAMBO
10) GREEN BERET

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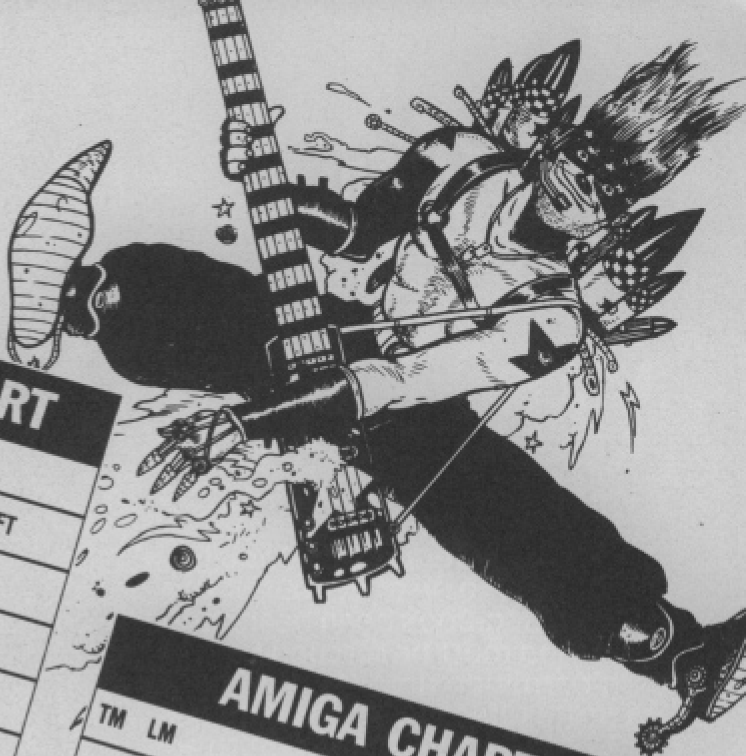
HOICE

is month?
xhall Cavalier.
ders (Whh!), Combat School.
White's ne'un (Mm good).
estern Games.



ADVENTURE CHART

TM	LM		
1		DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
2		GUILD OF THIEVES	RAINBIRD
3		YES PRIME MINISTER	MOSAIC
4		STAR WRECK	ALTERNATIVE
5		ALTER EGO	ACTIVISION
6		SHADOWS OF MORDOR	MELBOURNE HOUSE
7		LEGACY OF THE ANCIENTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS
8		FRANKENSTEIN	CRL
9		NORD AND BERT	INFOCOM
10		NOT A PENNY MORE	DOMARK



AMIGA CHART

TM	LM		
1	NE	IMPACT	AUDIOGENIC
2	3	TERRORPODS	PSYGNOSIS
3	1	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	MIRRORSOFT
4	4	GUILD OF THIEVES	RAINBIRD
5	NE	STAR GLIDER	RAINBIRD
6	10	BARBARIAN	PSYGNOSIS
7	NE	MOUSETRAP	MICRO VALUE
8	NE	PLUTOS	MICRO VALUE
9	NE	TEST DRIVE	ACCOLADE
10	NE	GOLDRUNNER	MICRODEAL

C64 CHART

TM	LM		
1	1	ARCADE CLASSICS	FIREBIRD
2	NE	MICRO RHYTHM PLUS	FIREBIRD
3	12	JOE BLADE	PLAYERS
4	2	KIK START 2	MASTERTRONIC
5	3	RENEGADE	IMAGINE
6	11	SOCCER BOSS	ALTERNATIVE
7	NE	INDIANA JONES	US GOLD
8	4	WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD	ACCESS-US GOLD
9	10	BACK TO THE FUTURE	FIREBIRD
10	NE	BUBBLE BOBBLE	FIREBIRD
11	16	INTERNATIONAL KARATE	ENDURANCE
12	14	FOOTBALL MANAGER	ADDICTIVE
13	9	CRICKET INTERNATIONAL	ALTERNATIVE
14	NE	SUPER SPRINT	ELECTRIC DREAMS
15	NE	ON FIELD FOOTBALL	FIREBIRD
16	NE	ON COURT TENNIS	FIREBIRD
17	NE	UCHI-MATA	ALTERNATIVE
18	8	LAST NINJA	SYSTEM 3
19	NE	HEAD COACH	ADDICTIVE
20	20	SUPER ROBIN HOOD	CODE MASTERS

Readers Coin-op Chart

TM	LM	
1	1	OUTRUN
2	2	DOUBLE DRAGON
3	4	ROAD RUNNER
4	3	R-TYPE
5	5	BUBBLE BOBBLE

Get yer top fives in for next month ASAP. First five lucky devils out of the tri-coloured hat get this season's ultimate designer garment, a turbo-powered CU T-shirt. Top fives should be sent to Coin-op chart, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And don't forget to tell us whether your chest size is puny, ample, or absolutely elephantine.

ARTS

PIRANHA

YOGI BEAR

Hey Hey Hey!
Are you smarter than the average bear? You'll need to be to get out of this one. Boo-Boo's been bear-napped and must be rescued before hibernation time. Hunters, mooses, vultures, bees, caverns, geysers as well as good old Ranger Smith are determined to stop you!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

TRAP THROUGH THE DOOR

Berk is back!
Now you can actually explore the dark and nasty regions for yourself as you try to rescue your friend Boni, trapped in the murky depths. Along the way all sorts of creepy critters will try to spook you in exciting arcade action!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassette £8.95 Discs £14.95

FLUNKY

The Royal Family as they have never been seen before!
This is your chance to work at Buck House — as a menial manservant. Your job is to cater to the residents' every whim, but you'll need cunning, strong nerves and quick reactions if you are going to avoid a nasty end.

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95
Coming soon for the Atari ST.



ATTACK!

Piranha



ROY OF THE ROVERS

Melchester Rovers is under threat of closure from greedy property developers. On the eve of a special celebrity match organised to save the club, Roy's team mysteriously disappears. Unless he rescues them he may end up facing the opposition alone!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

JUDGE DEATH

Megacity is being terrorised by the Dark Judges — Death himself and his cronies Fear, Fire and Mortis. They are dedicated to putting an end to life itself. As Judge Anderson you stand alone. Only your psychic powers and blazing gun can save Megacity!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £9.95 Discs £14.95

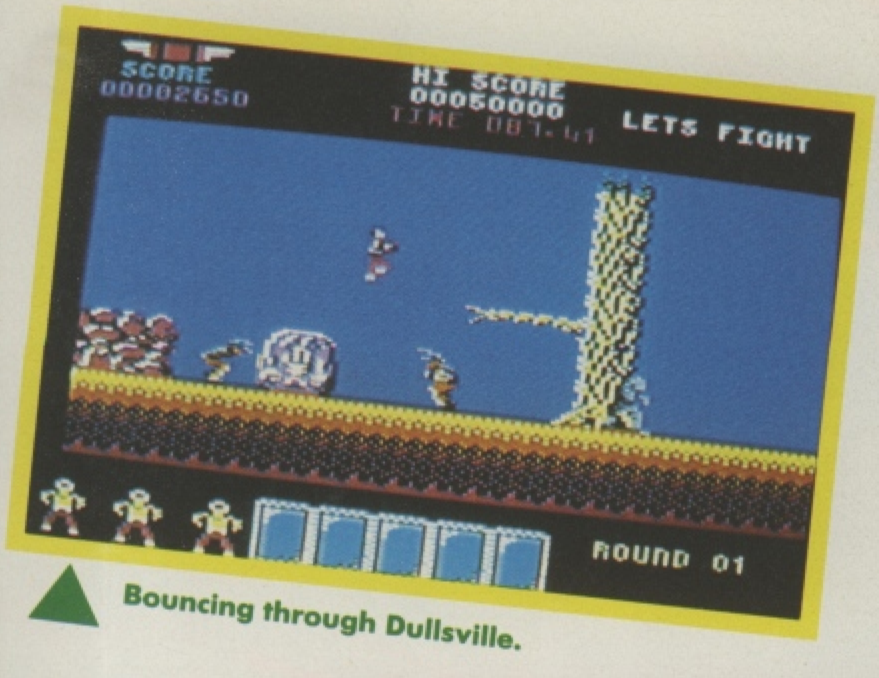
GUNBOAT

Powerful, manoeuvrable and deadly, the Gunboat under your command carries the most lethal waterborn weaponry to date. Deep in the complex maze of fjords and canal systems are your targets — huge submarine pens. Your mission — to seek and destroy!

Spectrum Commodore Amstrad
Cassettes £8.95 Discs £13.95

For release schedules, please contact Helen Holland at the address below. Piranha games are available from all good stockists or, in case of difficulty, direct from Helen Holland, Piranha, 4 Little Essex Street, London WC2R 3FL. Tel: 01-836 6633.

Piranha



Bouncing through Dullsville.



Zapping blurred warriors.

RYGAR

64/128
US Gold
Price:
£14.99/cass
£9.99/disk



And wandering through the Weary Woods.

The inlay to *Rygar* is pretty abysmal stuff: "4.5 billion years have passed since the earth's creation. Many dominators have ruled in all their glory. But Time, their greatest enemy, ultimately defeated their reign. And now a new Dominator's reign begins . . ."

Yes, it's appalling guff, isn't it. Still, look on the bright side — you've only got to read this review once, whereas if you are unlucky enough to become the owner of a copy of *Rygar* you'll have to sit through the computer laboriously typing out this nonsense after each lost game before it'll consent to let you have another go.

No, *Rygar* certainly isn't a game to play or review with a hangover. It's a conversion of a pretty average coin-op in which you play some other-worldly hero who plods through life zapping everything that comes his way.

You start off with five lives, and a generous time limit on each level. The graphics are small and mean, rendering any positive identification of your enemies impossible, but they seem to be a selection of hooded monks, hermit crabs, catherine wheels, warrior-bearing gryphons and translucent desert rats.

You've got to run or bounce through the scene zapping nasties (your weapon, whatever it is, only has a very short range so you don't get to kill them until they're at close quarters), jumping over obstacles and ravines, picking up extra icons which are left when you zap certain rocks (these give extra time or smart bomb everything on screen), crouching low to get the crawlers and leaping high to catch the airborne meanies.

The colour scheme, the lack of graphic quality and the speed and smallness of the sprites all combine to make this a frustrating and difficult game to negotiate. Often you're not really sure why you've lost a life or at whose hands.

Even worse is the joystick control — whether or not you manage to make it over the ravines seems to be more or less a matter of luck, and I certainly wound up losing at least one or two of my lives per go when, despite feverish jerking of the stick in vain attempts at lift-off, my character lazily descended into the pit in front of him.

At the end of each level you have a brief breather while your scores and time bonuses are totted up, then it's out once more into the next scene. The different levels aren't really all that different, with most of the obstacles and enemies repeated with minor variations.

When you lose your fifth and final life your onscreen character's body is plucked from the ground and carried off by what bears a passing resemblance to a winged lion. At least, most of the time: on the third level, however, I noticed that my corpse floated off of its own accord while at the other side of the screen the flying feline hovered, obviously wondering why his prey had left without him.

If *Rygar* sold for £1.99, it would be a poor piece of budget software by today's standards. To release it as a full-price top-of-the-range coin-op conversion is just a bad joke. If this is US Gold's idea of a strong pre-Christmas release, they'd better think again.

Nick Kelly

	Rating (1–10)
Graphics	2
Sound	5
Toughness	7
Endurance	3
Value	1

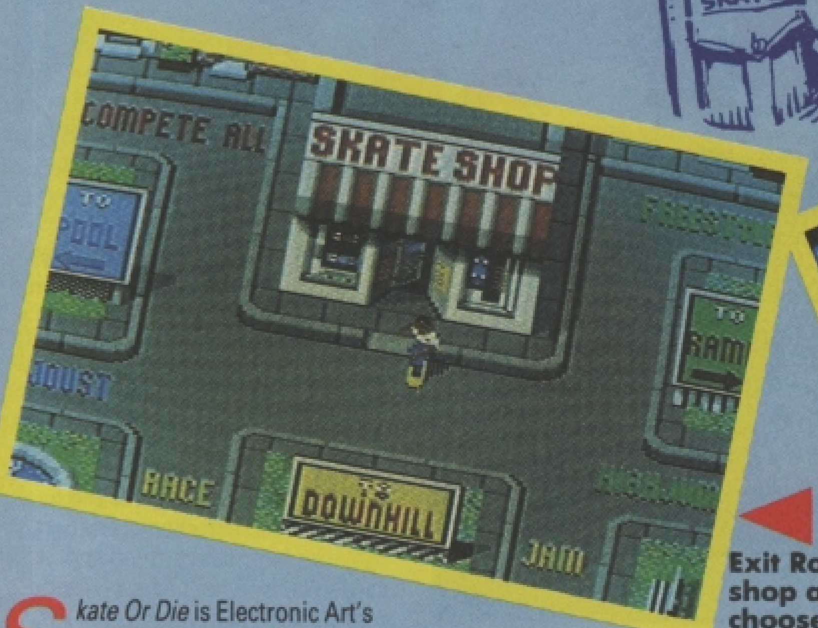
2 Overall

SKATE OR DIE

Electronic Arts
Price: £14.95/disk £9.95/ cassette







Exit Rodneys shop and choose an event.



Battered in a drained pool.

S*kate Or Die* is Electronic Art's contribution to the Great Skateboarding Revival (founder: M. Pattenden & Assocs.) and, with some reservations, it's a worthwhile addition to the small but growing number of skateboarding sims available.

There are five events to try your skills at, but first you've got to register with Rodney, the gruff and aged punk proprietor of the skateshop. Once you've entered your name in the registration form you get to choose from quite a wide range of board colours, then it's down to the most important choice — practice or compete.

The reason I say this is an important choice is that *SOD* has one very irritating feature: each event has a lengthy pause to be endured during loading. If you choose "compete", once you've finished an event you can't go straight back to try it again without sitting about twiddling your thumbs for about three minutes (and I was playing with the disk version — what it'll be like for you unfortunate cassette-loaders I shudder to think).

So for maximum enjoyment, at least until you've become reasonably skilful at the game, go for "practice". Now you'll find yourself outside the Skateshop, with the different events represented, *720°*-style, by different streets to be taken.

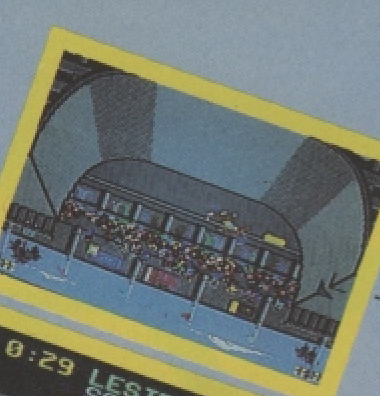
Freestyle is more or less the same as *California Games'* "half-pipe" event — you get points for various tricks attempted while barrelling around the inside of an enormous U-shaped bowl. There are two "Pump Zones" in the floor and pressing the trigger on your joystick while you're moving through these enables you to attempt certain tricks. This event is really quite good crack, though you'll have to go through a considerable amount of trial-and-error if you want to be able to do every possible stunt without going through the tiresome process of reading the instructions (*lazy git — Ed*). Even after I'd read the instructions I found some of the more spectacular tricks still eluded me. "Try tweeking your aerials by clicking in mid-air" the instructions suggested (*Ooooh, sounds painful — Ed*) and I did, but to no avail.

After all that concentration and timing, *High Jump* was a birrova doddle. The idea here is to see how high in the air you can go above the top rim of the half-pipe. Simply waggle your joystick like a maniac to gather impetus on your journey down from the opposite rim and see how you measure up against the graduated pole at the far side. Mad Mike P. had a shot at this and pronounced it "good fun" but after a few goes I must say that I found the challenge a wee bit too easy.

Downhill Race, on the other hand is well 'ard, sending you careering



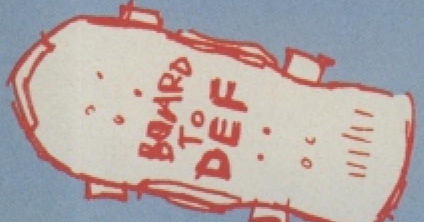
down a country road racetrack, scattered with gravel, flags and even hurdles to be negotiated. You get a choice of control movements — "regular" (which involves pulling *back* on the joystick to move forward, and which I found near-impossible to use) and "goofy" (which, far from being as its name suggests, allows you to control the board in a most realistic and sensible way). You're racing against time here, and, believe me, you'll need your wits about you to get your bonus.



Splattered in the half-pipe Freestyle.



Watch out for the garbage chute.

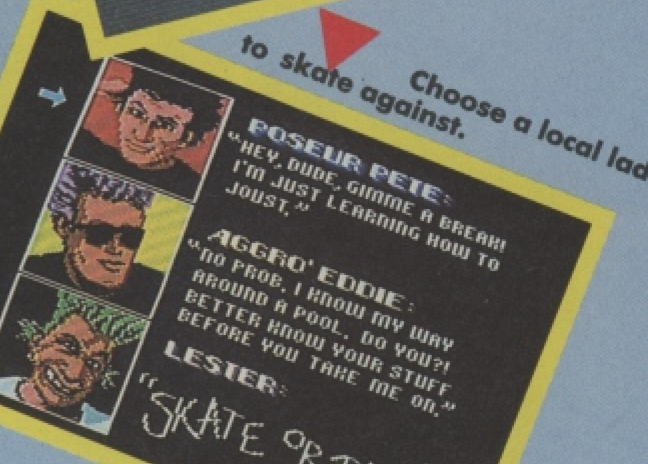




So how high can you try?



Picked up by the law at the end of Downhill Jam.



Choose a local lad to skate against.



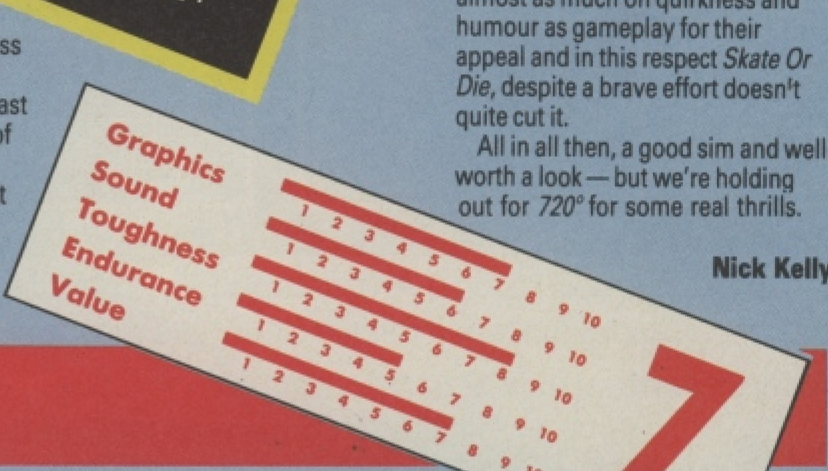
And if you think *Downhill Race* is a toughie, just check out *Downhill Jam*, in which you take on a buddy — or a computer-supplied local toughie — in a real Tom-and-Jerry style race through a hazardous series of back alleys. This really isn't easy, especially as you're each allowed to try to kick and punch the other off his board, thereby gaining valuable seconds and ground. The *Jam* is also where the humour of *SOD* really comes into its own. In early events coming a cropper might be accompanied by a simultaneous falling off of your helmet and pads. But in this event you're a trendy and rather violent punk — no padding, no helmet — and when things go wrong, the results are far more unusual. There are manholes to be fallen down, walls to run into and bins to be tripped over — often accompanied by the temporary loss of your fright-wig — but undoubtedly the best fate, or at least the funniest, is when you hit one of the two stretches of wire fence which hinder your progess: at first you seem to have passed straight through unscathed, but then, in a classic Hanna Barbara sequence, you fall to the floor in a heap of dissected fragments! The winner is the first one to reach the squad car which awaits you at the end of the last alley — presumably to cart you both off to borstal.

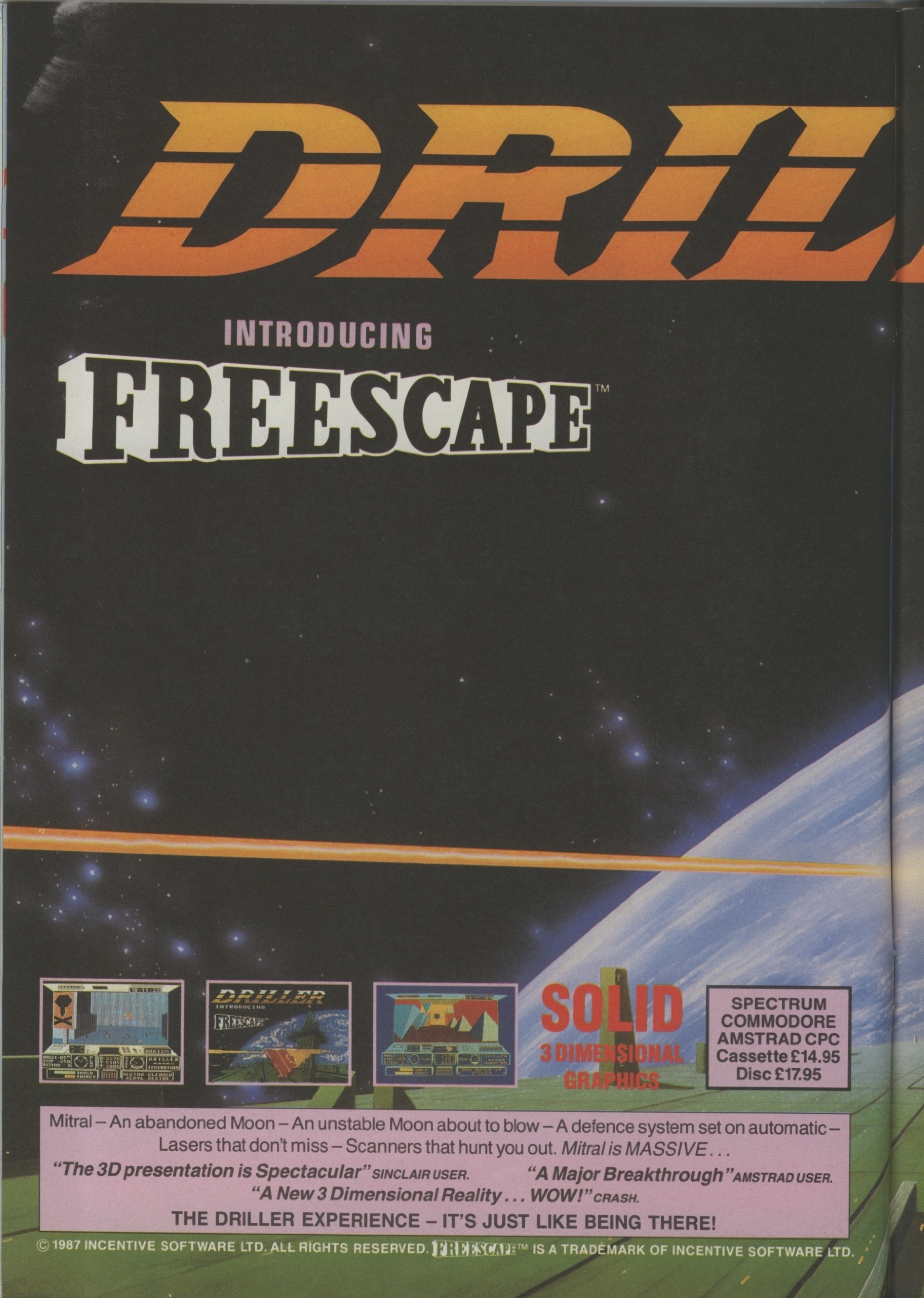
Finally, in *Pool Joust* you take on either your mate or one of three local nasties in a fight on wheels in an empty swimming pool. There's two of you and just one "paddle" which changes hands every five passes. When you've got it, do your best to hit your opponent with it while it's flashing, when he's got it, avoid him as best you can. Manoeuvring around the pool isn't easy and, frankly, seems a rather hit-or-miss affair. The first player to get three falls wins — but like in tennis you have to win by at least two points so if it's a ding-dong battle, it can continue for ever, or until you both get bored with this rather tedious event.

An overall reaction? Well, *Skate Or Die* is a "quality product", as we in CU Towers say: The graphics are good, the music's fine and the movement is well up to the very high standards necessary in games of this type. That said, it does seem to fall down a bit on some of its events — neither *High Jump* nor *Pool Joust* would have seen the light of day if I'd been programmer — and the aforementioned loading pauses are an irritant. And while *SOD* does make an attempt at being as sassy and streetsmart as the real thing, it's only on the *Downhill Jam* that it really succeeds in raising a laugh as well as a sweat. In my opinion the best "event" games rely almost as much on quirkness and humour as gameplay for their appeal and in this respect *Skate Or Die*, despite a brave effort doesn't quite cut it.

All in all then, a good sim and well worth a look — but we're holding out for *720°* for some real thrills.

Nick Kelly




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COMBAT



64/128
Ocean
Price: £9.95 cassette
£14.95 disk

Gimme some, gimme some PT, PT — that's what I need. And that's what *Combat School* gives you. A hefty dose of military disservice and *Decathlon* joystick waggling.

If 1987 is remembered for anything it will be for 'Namism. It was the year film producers rediscovered Vietnam war movies, right down to the soundtrack from one, 'Full Metal Jacket', becoming a hit record. Ocean, with typical guile, have ripped the tune off and struck it on the front of this conversion. Still everyone's stealing records these days.

If you've seen 'Full Metal Jacket' then you'll know what to expect in Combat School, because the Konami game is based on just that kind of gruelling physical preparation. The object is to qualify as a captain and go on to tackle a dangerous mission. Before you get that far you'll have to undergo a rigorous course of training to prepare you for battle. This takes the form of seven lung-bursting, sweat-inducing, back-breaking events. Stand by your joysticks!

The game kicks off with the **Assault Course.** In true 'Krypton Factor' style you're expected to complete it before the time runs out. You get a split screen here enabling you to play against an opponent or the computer in a straight race. The course consists of a series of walls, some low enough to hurdle, others which have to be scrambled over. To finish the course you have to swing across a set of bars and leg it across the line. That entails thirty seconds of joystick waggling and hitting the fire button to clear the walls. This is no wrist buster though, and after a few goes I was giving the computer a head start.

Graphically the assault course is probably the best looking event in the whole game. The animation is slick and realistic, the backgrounds detailed and colourful.

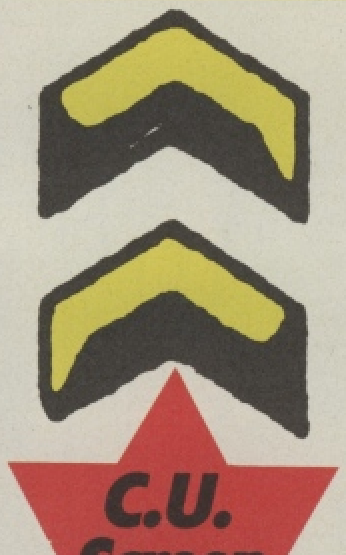
Successfully completing the course will take you on to the first of the three **Shooting Events.** This is a machine gun test with your man lying prone and taking out a series of targets, thirty-five in all as they rise up randomly from a field. This is the event in the coin op where you get the tracker ball whizzing around so that the machine gun rakes through the targets. You can't do that here unless you have an autofire switch on your joystick. Instead you have to press fire on each one which can be a bit of a tricky business when you're trying to get the

The assault course — don't slam the wall.



Gimme six pull-ups you lousy soldier.





T SCHOOL



crosshair to scroll nicely through the targets.

When you do hit the targets they shatter realistically which makes up for the otherwise disappointing graphics on this section. Your machine gunner looks a bit like a stick insect, but I can live with that.

It's worth mentioning here that if you fail you go right back to the beginning, but if you only just miss out you get a chance to redeem yourself by doing several strenuous **pull-ups** in a set time. This entails some fairly furious stick waggling, but there again it serves you right for being a nancy boy.

Event three is the **Iron Man Race,** another sort of assault course. Again you're up against the clock as you leg it, waggling the stick forwards this time, through a terrain covered in rocks and mines. Make it through these without falling arse over collarstud and you have a fast-flowing river to negotiate. There's a canoe in the middle which you can clamber into to up your speed, but logs float downstream and if you don't avoid them you'll be tipped out again. One mistake here and you can run out of time.

The Iron Man test has to be the worst of the seven events graphically. There doesn't seem to have been much attention to detail and the terrain looks flat and messy. It's an easy event really as long as you don't fall, nevertheless I have to say it's my least favourite. The background graphics look as if the programmer spilt his coffee down the back of the computer here.

If you negotiate the Iron Man course you get another dose of **shooting.** This time it's strictly a duck shoot with the targets easily picked off. This time however, you have to hit fifty targets in thirty seconds which doesn't leave much leeway if you miss a couple.

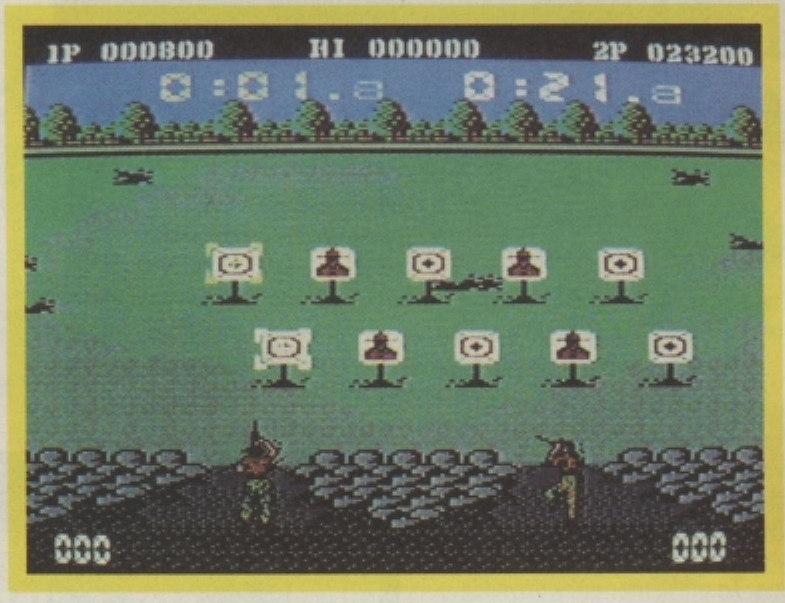
Should you get the "you made it!" message you go on to the **arm wrestling** an event which defeats me. That's not because I can't do it, it doesn't matter whether you win or lose at this piece of senseless waggling because you always go through to the final shooting stage. However don't take a breather here because you can get a much needed time bonus for the next stage.



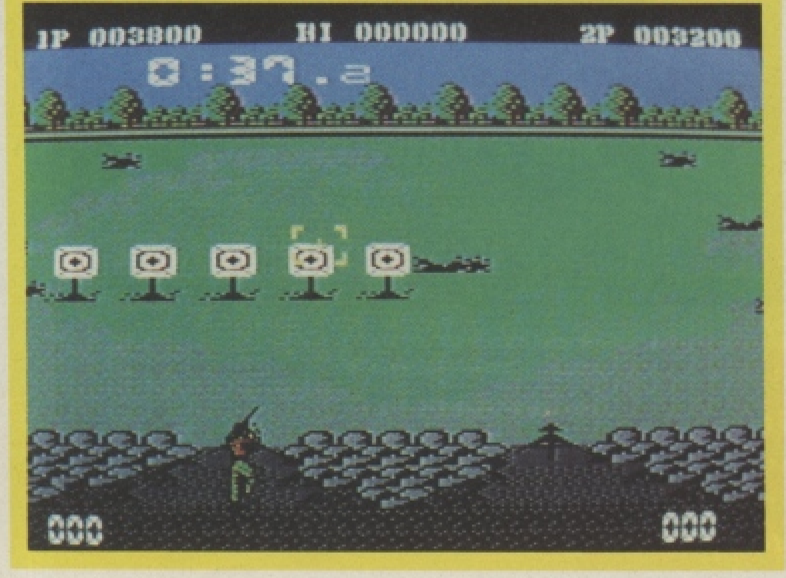
▲ **Arm wrestling.**

The third and final firing range takes you back to **target shooting** in the field. This time however you can't blaze away wildly. The targets which pop up are always in the same spot but they are interspersed with red marine silhouettes which indicate that one isn't to be shot. That means you have to think before you fire, a problem that's made worse by the sticky joystick movement here which won't allow

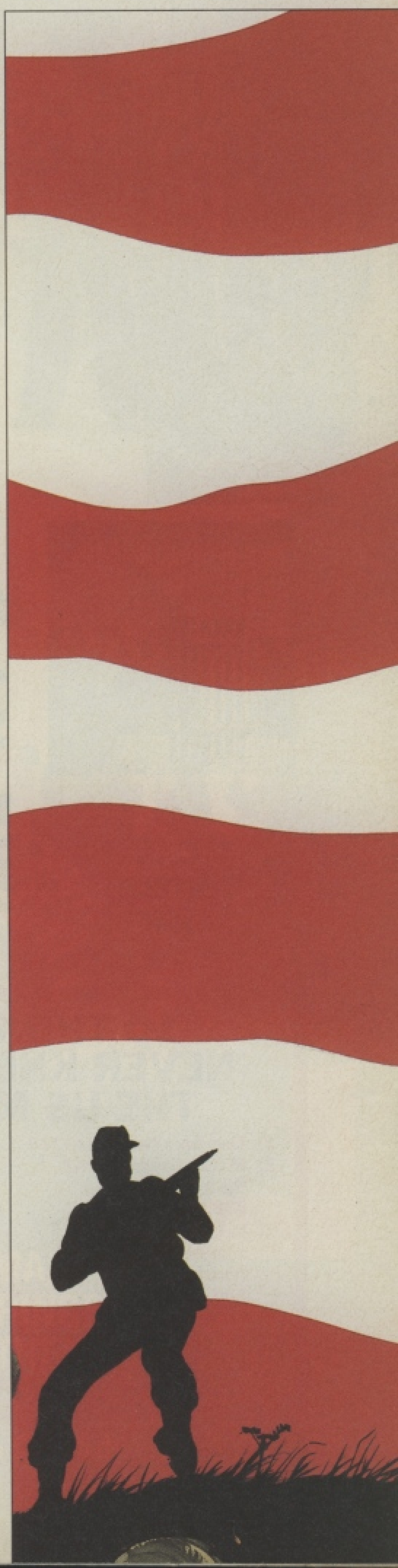
▼ **The final firing range — don't hit the silhouettes.**



▼ **The first firing range — you need thirty hits.**



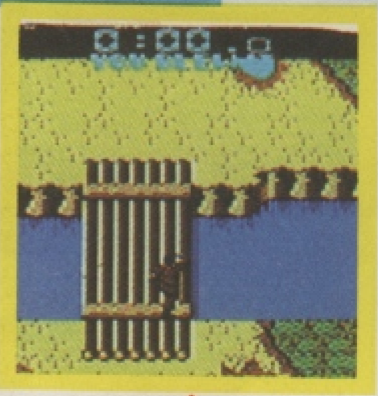








Pick off the flying prams.



The Iron Man test but are your boots made of lead?

C.U. Screen Star

you to scroll the gun through the targets as before. This time you have to switch the crosshair through each one which makes it very difficult to get from one side to the other before they all drop down again. To make matters worse if you hit the wrong target the stick locks up completely and you lose your chance that round.

The firing range is one of the toughest events here and one that frequently trips me up. You need lightning quick reactions and the only way I can ever pass is by way of a lot of chin-ups for getting close.

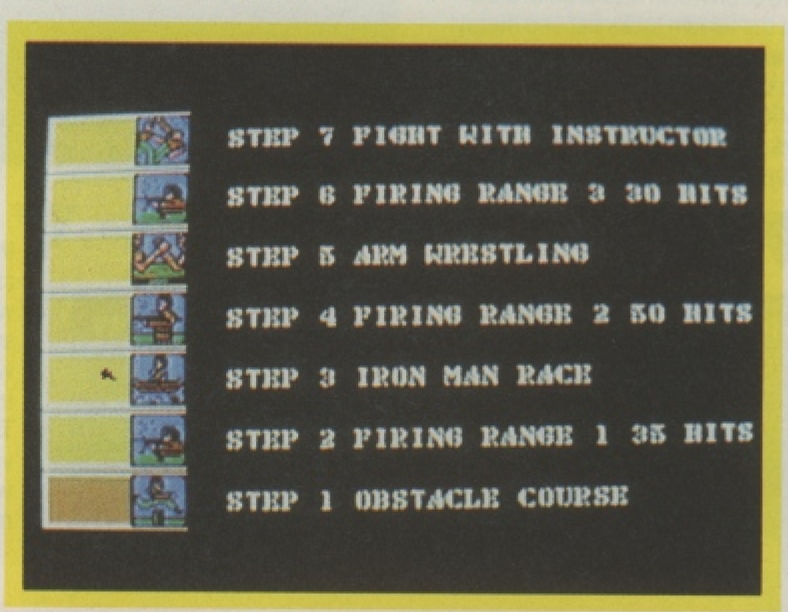
The final test is the fight with the **drill instructor**. When Konami originally thought this up they must have just seen the scene in 'Officer and a Gentleman' when Richard Gere punches it out with the sergeant. This scene is pure beat 'em up with you having to subdue the instructor within a set time limit. You have kicks and punches as per normal, but this guy is mean and experienced and will give you a really tough time of it.

Graduating gives you the chance at **the Mission** that concludes *Combat School*. This is a top secret assignment to rescue a hostage from an American Embassy. The instructions won't tell you much about the job you have to do, but they entail using all the skills you've acquired in training including the shooting, jumping and hand-to-hand combat. You won't need your arm wrestling skills here, soldier.

That's *Combat School*, a possible ten different tests of skill and stamina that make it great value for any arcade gamer. Konami's game proved a surprise flop after the way it was so well received critically which made it look as if Ocean had rushed in for a duff licence. However as a conversion it's just what companies should be looking at. Nothing here overstretches the computer and whilst the graphics in one or two places could have been improved the gameplay is varied and absorbing. I'd have liked to see some of the nice touches from the coin-op included like the odd line of speech or at least the message "Go home to your mother!"

Nevertheless this is a classy job and bears the unmistakable stamp of Dave Collier on it. Forget *Out Run* this is *the* game for Christmas.

Mike Pattenden



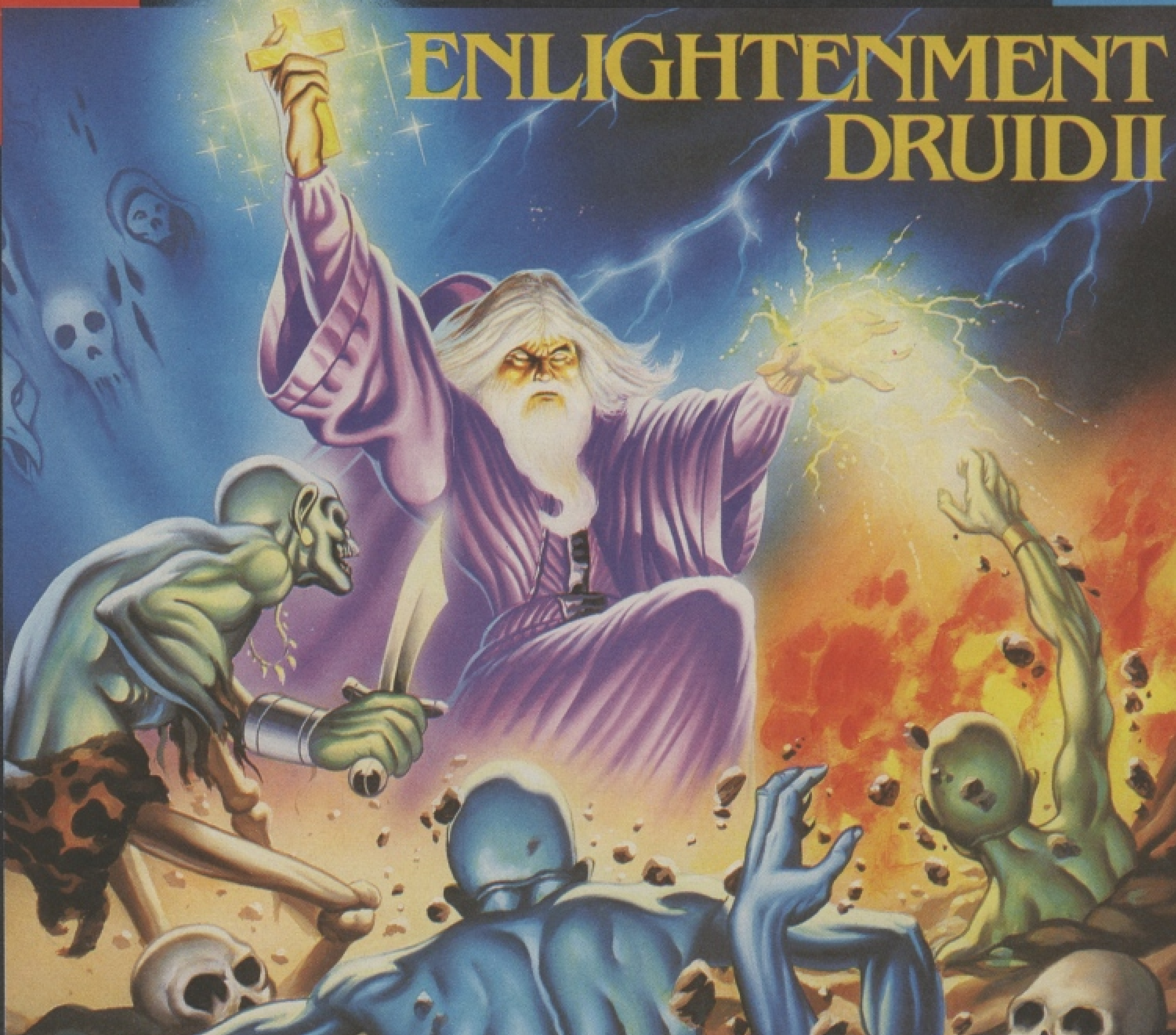
10 THINGS YOU NEVER KNEW ABOUT THE US MARINES

1) They were created in 1775
2) At their height in WWII the force numbered 450,000
3) In 1946 after demobilisation there were less than 100,000
4) The commander of the Marines is a 4-star general
5) Black soldiers were only allowed to join in 1942
6) The marines are classed as 'amphibious support troops'
7) They are in fact a wing of the navy
8) Marines are big and ugly
9) Never tell a marine this to his face
10) Er, that's it

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall

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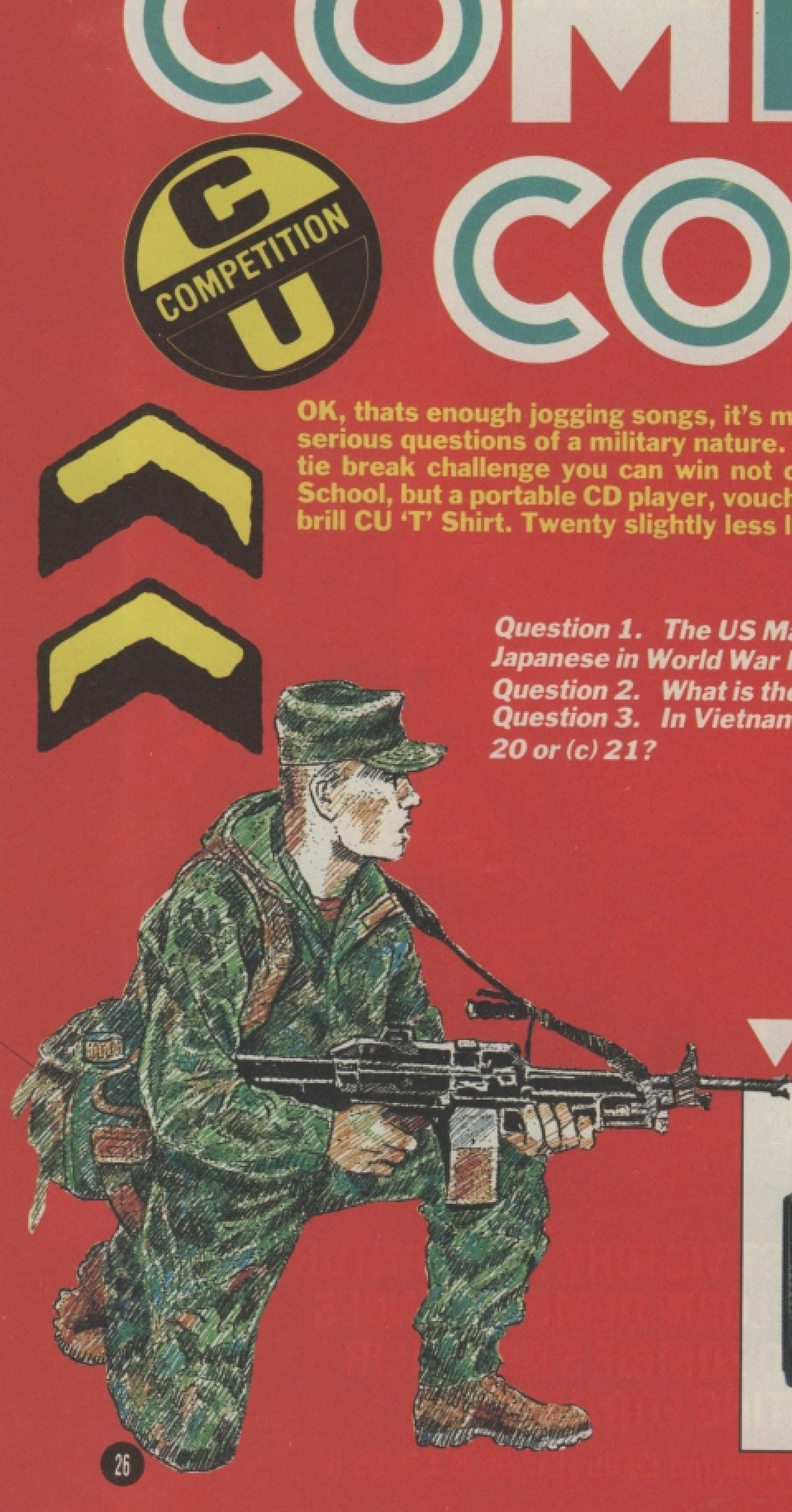
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COMBAT COMPO

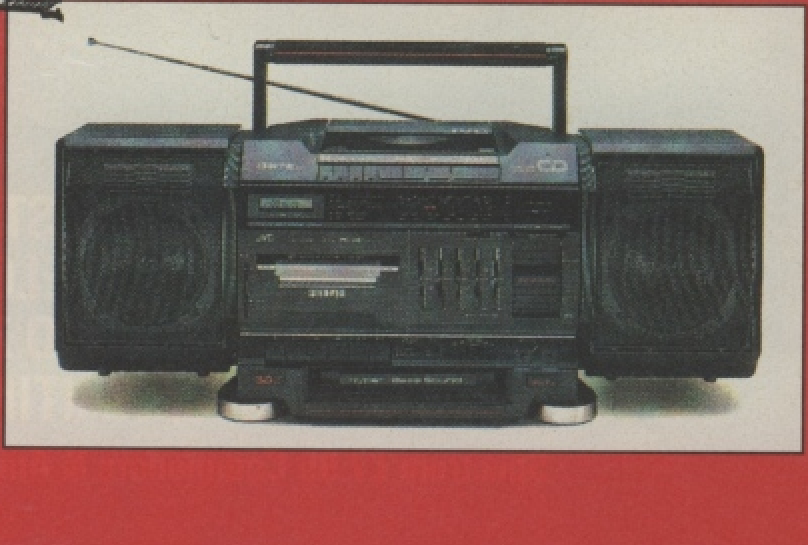
OK, thats enough jogging songs, it's making me puffed out writing them. Time for some serious questions of a military nature. Which, if you answer correctly, and complete our tie break challenge you can win not only a copy of Ocean's 'Screen Starred' Combat School, but a portable CD player, vouchers to buy five CD's of your choice, and one mega brill CU 'T' Shirt. Twenty slightly less lucky runners-up will receive copies of the game.

Question 1. The US Marines fought and won a major battle against the Japanese in World War II. Was it at (a) Iowa Jima (b) Hawaii or (c) Midway.
Question 2. What is the motto of the US Marine corps?
Question 3. In Vietnam the average age of a US Marine was (a) 19 (b) 20 or (c) 21?

Tie Break
Write a verse of "I'm Gonne Be Your Drill Instructor" which will encapsulate the parts of CU that you like best.

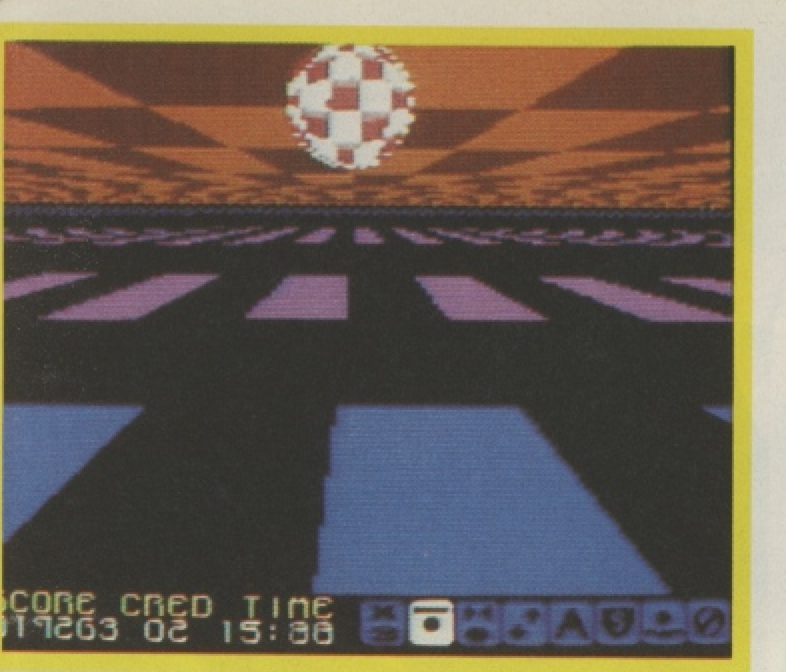


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Cosmic Causeway

Regular readers (are there any other kind?) will know that I think *Trailblazer* was and is the best thing since spring onion flavour Hula Hoops. *Cosmic Causeway* is *Trailblazer II*, but right now I can't think of a packet of crisps that comes close, (*what about Tortillia chips? Ed*).

If you've never heard of, or seen, *Trailblazer* here's the run-down: Imagine first of all a formula one racing sim like *Pole Position*, but instead of running through tunnels, cities and forests the road is suspended in space. The cosmic causeway is not like any ordinary road. For one thing you don't drive along it in a car. You bounce along it with a chequered red and white ball. The road is full of holes. Not the kind you find on the M1 either. Disappear down these ones and you don't reappear for a good three or four seconds.

Holes are not the only disaster areas, *Cosmic Causeway* has no less than eight colour coded squares some of which it pays to land on, others to be avoided at all costs. Red squares for example slow you down to a snail's pace. As the object of the game is to reach the end of each section before running out of time it's as well to steer clear of the red squares. Keep out of the way of purple ones too, unless you want to go down the causeway backwards that is. Purple squares are a nightmare, if you're really unlucky you can end up hopping backwards for miles from one purple square to another. Equally unpleasant are the cyan squares which reverse the left/right on your joystick — makes you feel sick.

Its not all bad news though. You can bounce over a lot of this nastiness just by pressing the fire button, but your timing will have to be good. Furthermore there are several kinds of square which will actually help you on your way. Green squares speed you up, though inevitably this just brings the encroaching doom that bit faster. Best of all are the blue squares which send you on a giant bounce enabling you to avoid all the nastiness below.

So, you get the picture. The ball goes flying down the causeway, bouncing when you press the fire buttons and going backwards, up, down, quick, slow or whatever depending on which squares you hit. You've got to reach the end of the section before the clock runs out on you. There are 24 levels and 6 sections in each level. At the end of each section remaining time is added to your score as a bonus. There the similarity with *Trailblazer* ends and the real fun starts.

Trailblazer was a two player game and you could play play a section whenever you fancied. These options have been sacrificed in *Cosmic Causeway*, but what's in their place more than makes up for them. The major difference is the appearance of a shimmering white disk on each section. If you manage to collide with a white disk you are awarded between one and three credits which you can spend on icon features. There are eight icons altogether which appear at the beginning of each section. Providing you have enough credits you can buy any of the icon features which increase in price according to their usefulness and last for one level only. Icon features range from the relatively cheap score "X3" at two credits to the expensive, but brilliant "roll over holes" (indispensible) and "clock retarder" at seven creds.



Landin' on pink . . .



Aimin' for amber . . .



Phew! Makes you think.

Another exciting depature from *Trailblazer* is the inclusion of the fire breathing dragon on the last section of each level. The dragon looks remarkably like a truncated version of the monster from *Space Harrier* and must be destroyed before you can reach the end of the level. Other new monsters and obstacles have been introduced including aliens, trees, boulders and walls. You can fire on the aliens, dodge the trees and boulders like a maniac downhill skier. The walls are a different problem. You could try going through the doors, but it's a risky business. I reckon the way to do it is go for the "Turbo icon" feature — a snip at five creds — and go so fast you simply smash right through them. Sounds good doesn't it? Yet to be tried in practice though. Those discs are bloody difficult to get hold of.

What else? The sound is absolutely wonderful, turn the music off and turn the volume up full. Spend the whole of Christmas playing it. Stop only for food, sleep and any alcohol offered by drunken relatives.

Ken McMahon

Graphics
Sound
Toughness
Endurance
Value

9 Overall



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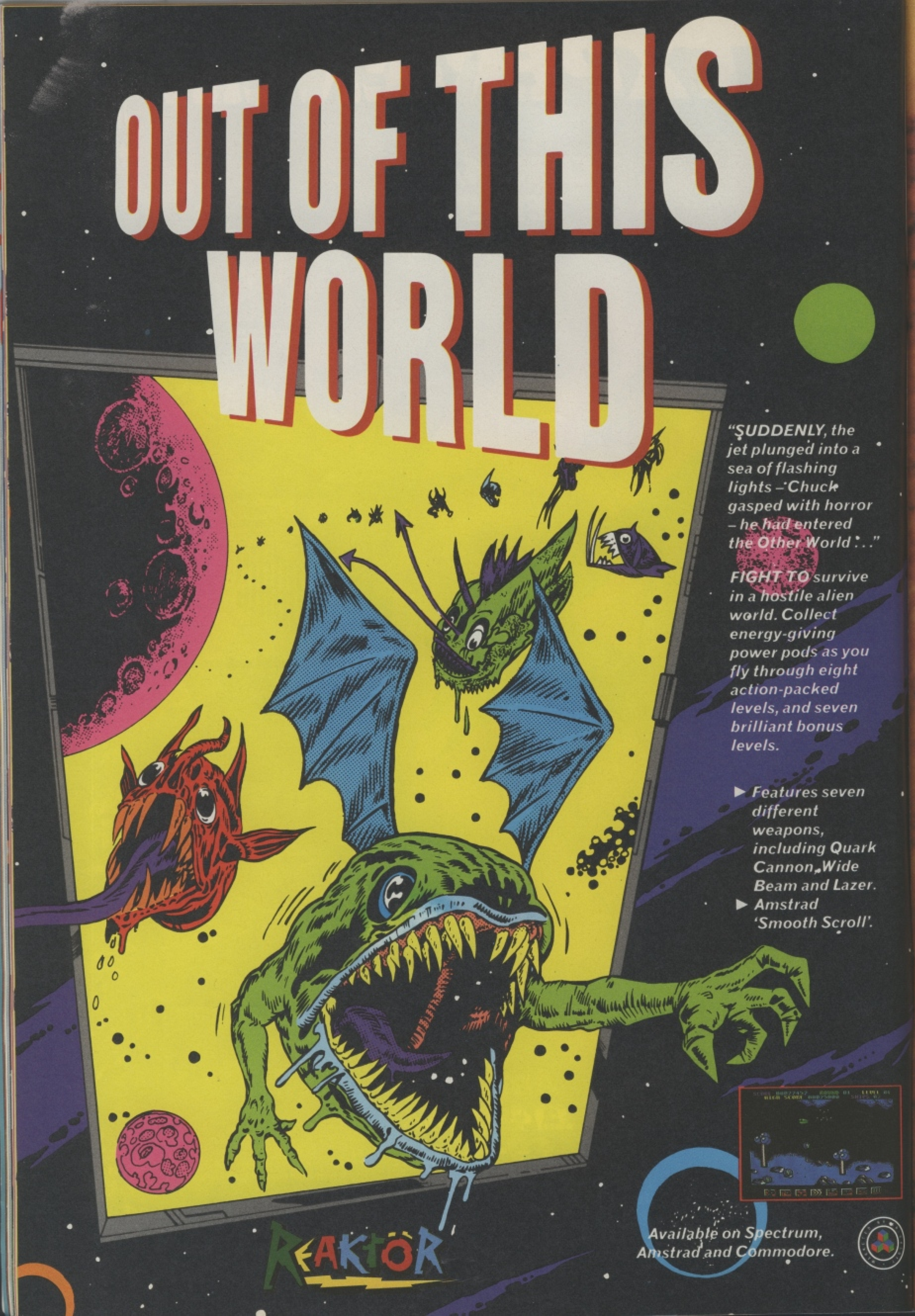




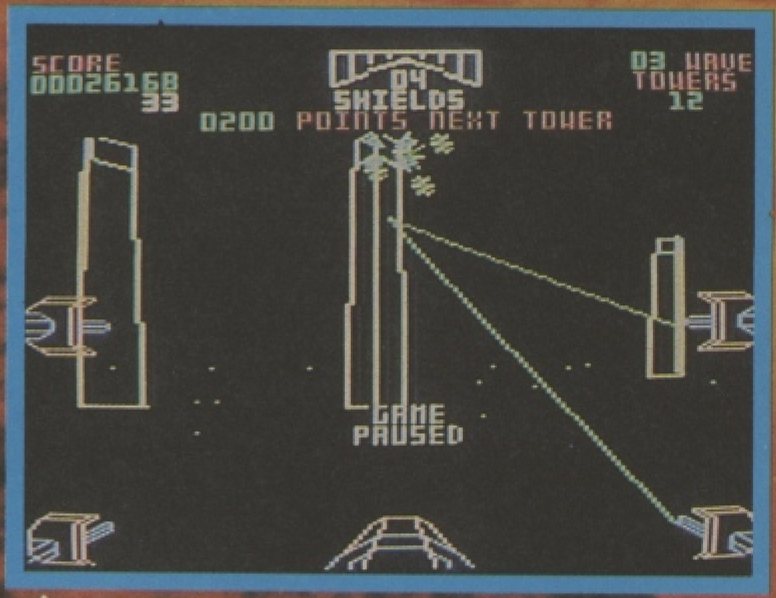
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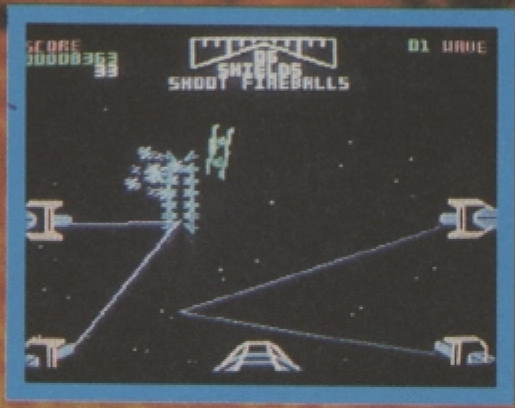

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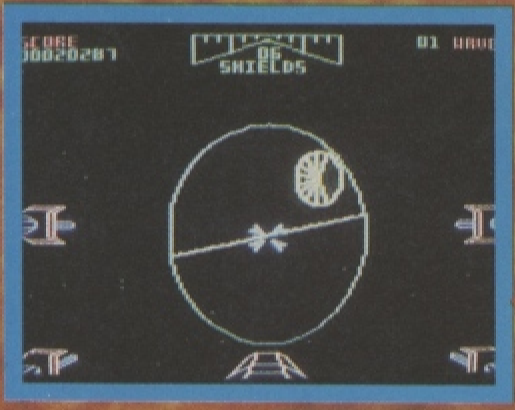


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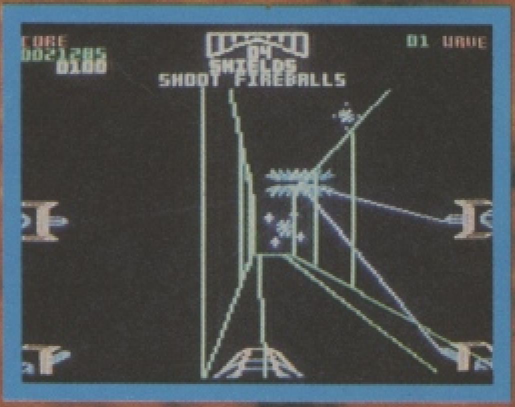


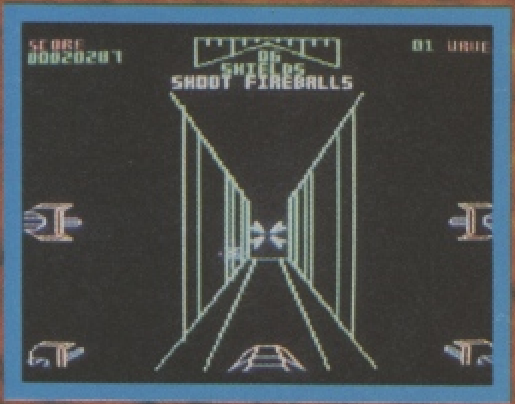
Tie fighters to repulse.



Climb into Luke's skyboots.

Deep in the Dark Star.





Save the universe.

I'm feeling decidely apathetic this chilly evening, so I dearly hope none of you are going to tell me you didn't see George Lucas's money-making, record-breaking Sci-Fi epic. . . Oh. There's always one, isn't there! Well, for the sake of YOU, I'll explain. Our hero Luke Skywalker was roped in to saving the universe by an old Jedi knight (an ancient band of warriors guided by the 'force' dedicated to do-gooding) called Ben Kenobi. Saving the universe (a popular task in computer games) is in this instance achieved by destroying a huge space station called The Death Star. The Death Star is the HQ of the evil empire, led by the equally evil Darth Vader (who incidentally turns out to be Luke's father in the sequel, but that's another story. . .) Anyway as the MENSA members probably guessed, your objective is to take the role of Luke and do just as well as Mark Hammill did in the motion picture.

Stars Wars is not only a movie conversion, but also an arcade conversion. A hugely successful arcade game it was too. *Star Wars*, despite being three years old is still fairly popular now, and still can be found in the arcades. It still attracts a 'cult' following who can make one game last several hours.

Star Wars is a vector graphic shoot 'em up, and as far as I can tell it was the inspiration for many of the vector shoot em' ups on the 64 today like *Starglider, Deathscape* etc. Anyway, despite its wonderful and cultural background is it worth paying the sort of money for this game that could buy a front row seat for the long-awaited Hoddle and Waddle tour?

There are three levels of difficulty in *Star Wars* the harder the one chosen the bigger the bonus. The first stage of the game is set en route to the Death Star, in deep space. The empire's infamous tie fighters swirl all round you and must kill all these off before you progress on to level two. But don't be gullible enough to think that they just lie still like sitting ducks. Oh no, they're armed all right, you must blast the fireballs they fire at you, or your shield will be depleted. Nine hits and you're history, Luke!

The second stage (which is non-existent on 'easy' level) is set on the surface of the Death Star. You must fly along the surface taking out all the defence towers as you go. The way to do this is to shoot them directly on the top causing their circuits to go haywire. The towers also fire at you. Oh and don't bump in to them or your shield will go down. Hard life being a Jedi, huh?

Stage three is pretty tough too. You've made it into a trench, deep, deep, into the surface of the Death Star. If you can make it to the end, you will see a small hole which is the only way to destroy the Death Star. Shoot this and it will cause a chain reaction, causing the Death Star to explode in to eight million oven chip sized fragments. Hurrah!

Star Wars is an excellent game in the arcades but not I'm afraid on the 64. Not really the fault of the programmers though. Vector graphics have never worked as well on the Commodore as they have on other bigger machines. They just don't carry quite the same bright clout.

Ferdy Hamilton

	Rating (1–10)
Graphics	5
Sound	4
Toughness	5
Endurance	5
Value	6

5
Overall

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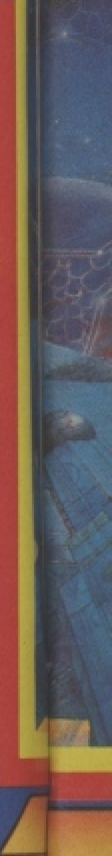




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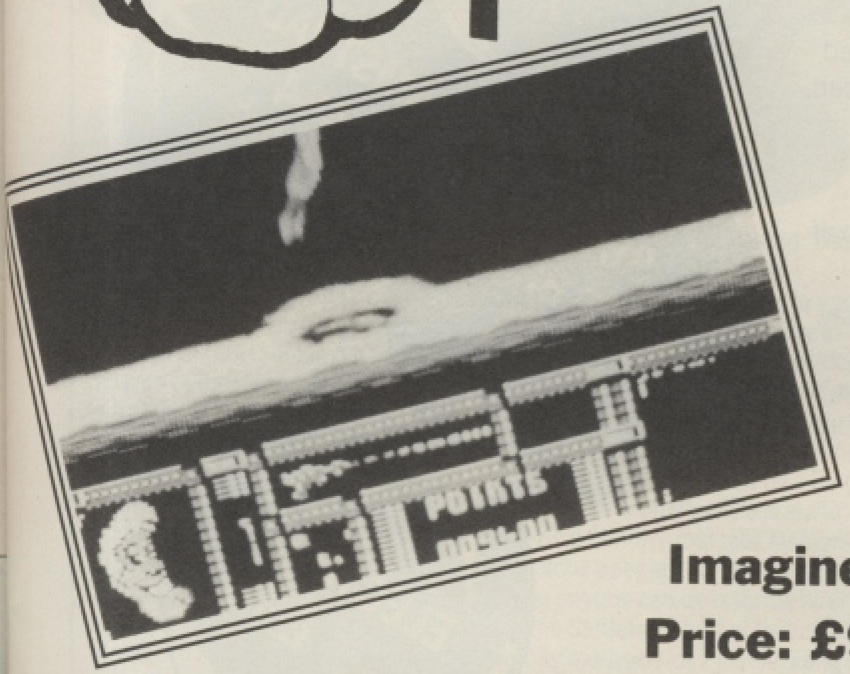

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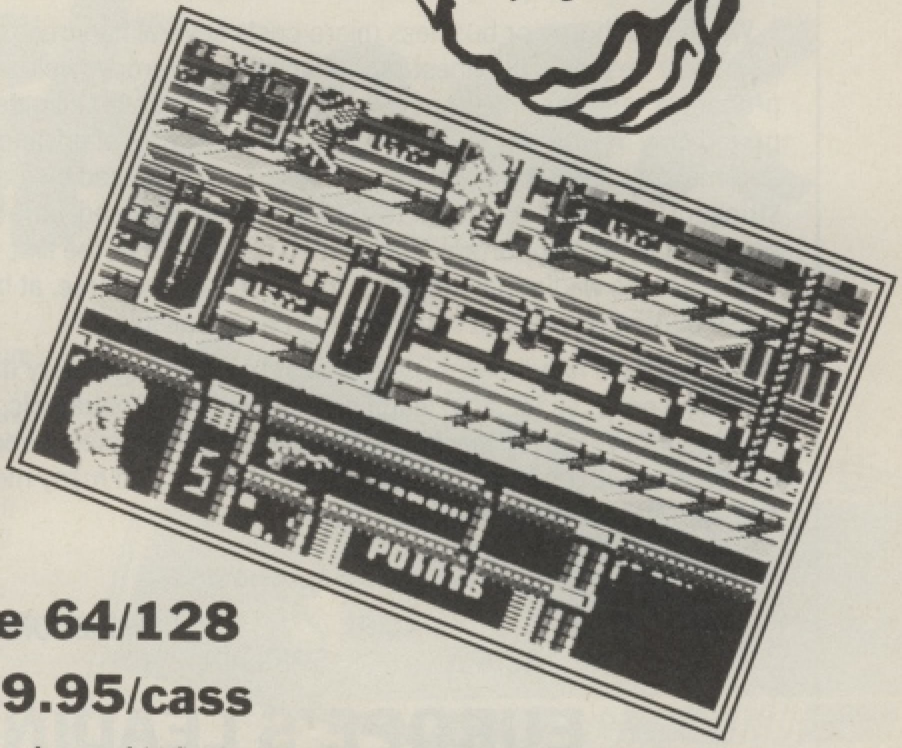

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Freddy is everything a man wants to be, handsome confident, strong, brave, intelligent (well almost.) Not totally unlike myself, in fact. But unlike myself, even Freddy isn't totally perfect. He has one big problem, his swollen ego all too often tends to overrule his good sense. So you can imagine what happened when Freddy held one of his notorious rave ups, had too much to drink, and decided (against much protest) to go on a little whizz to the Milky Way in his ship. Foolish Freddy landed in a meteorite storm and attempted to beat his high score on Asteroids (only this time there were no three lives!)

Now on the planet Ternat Freddy discovers that he is near the alien base of Kaldar and must hijack some some serious space-wheels and get the hell out of there if he is going to have any chance of survival.

Your job is to take the role of Freddy Hardest and to blast, kick and leap your way through the game's two levels. Two levels may not sound like much but if a god like Freddy needs your help it must be bloody difficult. The game is played on the planet's surface, Freddy must make it from left to right avoiding all aliens which cross his path. Well, he doesn't really have to avoid the aliens, he can always dispose of them if he pleases, either by karate kicking the ones that fly over his head, or blasting his laser in to the belly of the ones on ground level.

These unfortunately are not the only problems our hero will have to face on the first level of his quest, and they are not by any means the hardest either. Without doubt, of all Freddy's wondrous qualities (and he has many) is his ability to jump high in to the air. There are many craters full to the brim with bubbling acid that our handsome hero will have to leap over, unless of course he wants his rugged good looks spoilt. Without doubt though the trickiest feature of the first level has to be the large gaps in the planet's surface, these are so wide that to cross them you must land on a moving platform and then leap off it to safety on the other side. Not easy!!

Part two is a fat lot more complex than part one, which plays as a simple arcade game. To reach part two you must have the access code which you receive at the end of part one. Freddy's part one mission was to reach the enemy base. Now he has arrived there he must escape. But it's not that simple. There are three steps to be completed, first he must obtain the captain's code, then he must load the ship's energy, and finally, discover the instructions which will send him in to hyperspace and home again.

The second level looks extremely similar to *V*, although it isn't by any means a copy. The aliens from the first level are unfortunately still around though, and your laser has this nasty habit of running out. But luckily, on level two Freddy has mastered the skill of boxing, so if all else fails smash 'em in the gob!

The way to clear the second level is to collect the nuclear energy cells and then put them on to the special loading lifts. This is not too easy as the base is made up of three levels and finding your way out isn't too easy.

Freddy Hardest is not the most original game I've ever played, and probably not one of the most captivating either. Still, the first level is fairly addictive, in a certain strange way, but they should have made it longer and tougher instead of bothering to put a second rate arcade adventure on the other side. Graphically it isn't half as good as its Spectrum counterpart, and the sound is Spectrum simulated (Beep! Beep! Knoworrimean?) Still if anyone feels like a little arcade fun, you could do worse.

Ferdy Hamilton

Rating	Score (1–10)
Graphics	6
Sound	2
Toughness	5
Endurance	4
Value	6
Overall	**6**

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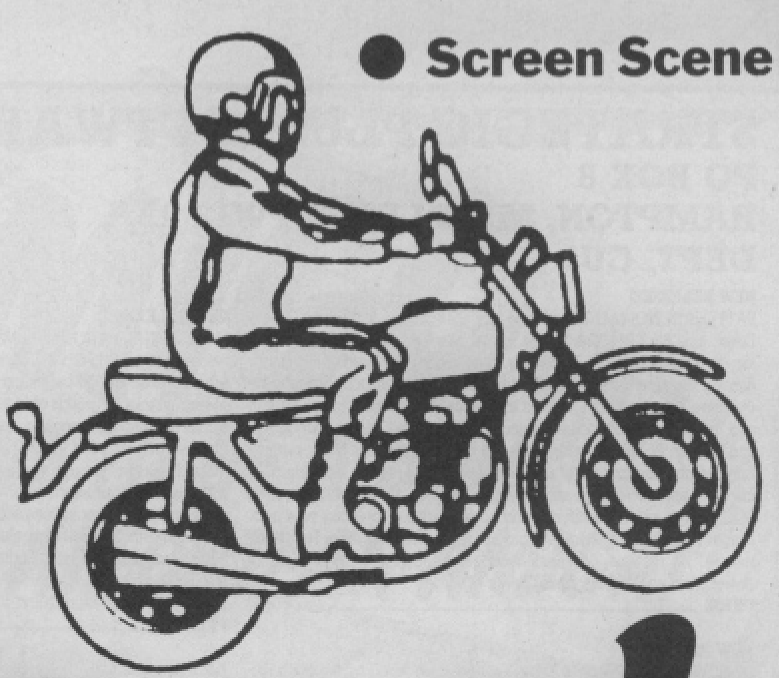
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Mean Streak

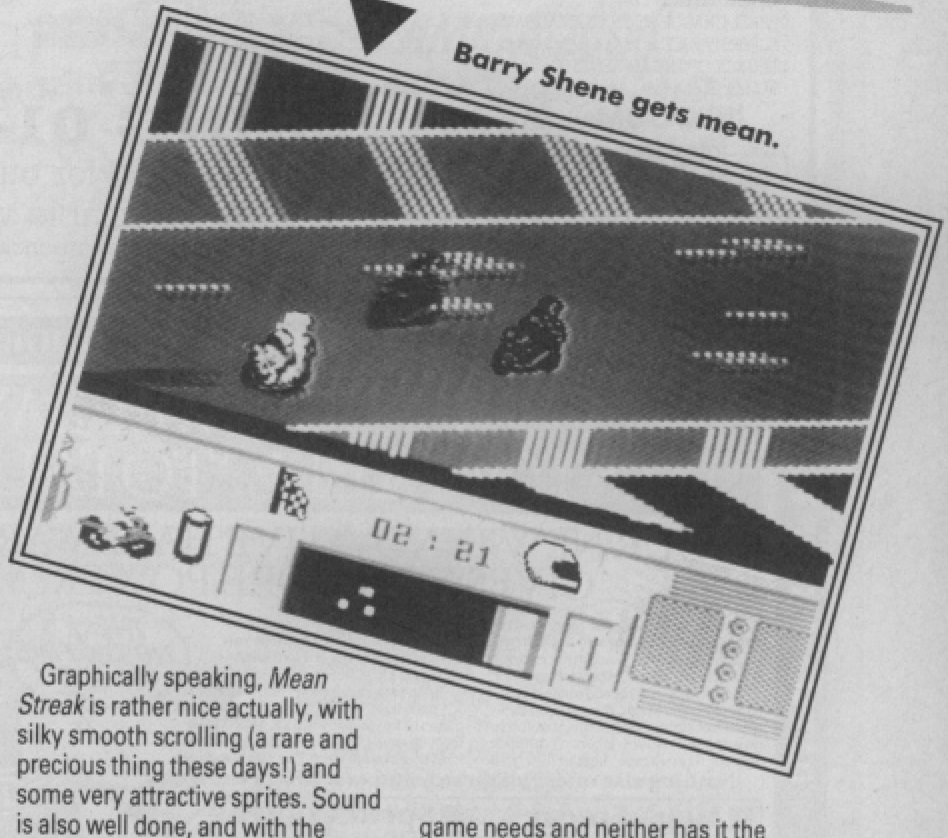
The last Mirrorsoft game I was fortunate enough to look at was *Defender of the Crown*, I would be very surprised if Mirrorsoft could possibly make this game as graphically beautiful and compelling as their brilliant Cinemaware conversion for the 64 but who knows?

Eddie Kidd became a model. Street Hawk took his last commercial break. Why? Because this, my gasoline guzzling friends is the 23rd Century, life is not lived outside of the home, people have learnt the brilliant, if rather unsociable art of molecular transportation, roads are now barren and unused.

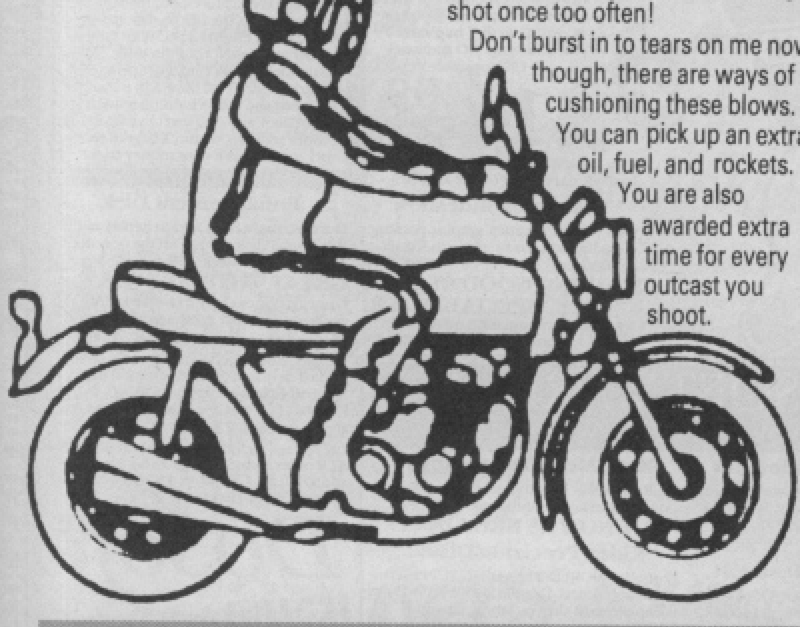
This idealistically perfect society suits all but a group of rebels, this group have offered the grand prize of the ultimate motor-bike, the Mean Streak. To earn this majestic prize you must travel along all five levels of the infamous Battletrack, a ring road which is the perimeter of the capital city (Once the M25!) and return alive. Easy.? No way, not with an evil bunch of suckers like the Outcasts who ride the Battletrack and kill anyone who dare to set tyre upon it. So dare you accept the challenge. You do? Well then, mount your bike and go!

The game scrolls diagonally across the screen and is seen from raised view. Your Mean Streak cycle has the ability to speed up, and slow down (*Wow! — Ed*). It can also fire rockets and shoot bullets, or slime a bit of oil in the path of anyone who dare approach it from behind. The enemy Outcasts are also on motorbikes almost identical to yours in every way, but for the ability to fire rockets. Oh, and their bikes don't have the stunning chrome paint job either! Shooting up the outcasts isn't the only problem you're going to have to face either, not by a long way. There is obviously a craze in the 23rd Century that tells fashion-concious people, that the trendiest thing anyone can do is throw litter on the Battletrack (either that or my family has been for a picnic along that way) because there is an amazingly large amount of debris littered along the floor which will damage your tyres, causing a blow out and a loss of one of your five lives. A tyre blow out, is just one of the many ways a rebel with a ridiculous cause can expect to meet his death. He could also run out of time, fuel, oil or maybe he could get shot once too often!

Don't burst in to tears on me now though, there are ways of cushioning these blows. You can pick up an extra oil, fuel, and rockets. You are also awarded extra time for every outcast you shoot.



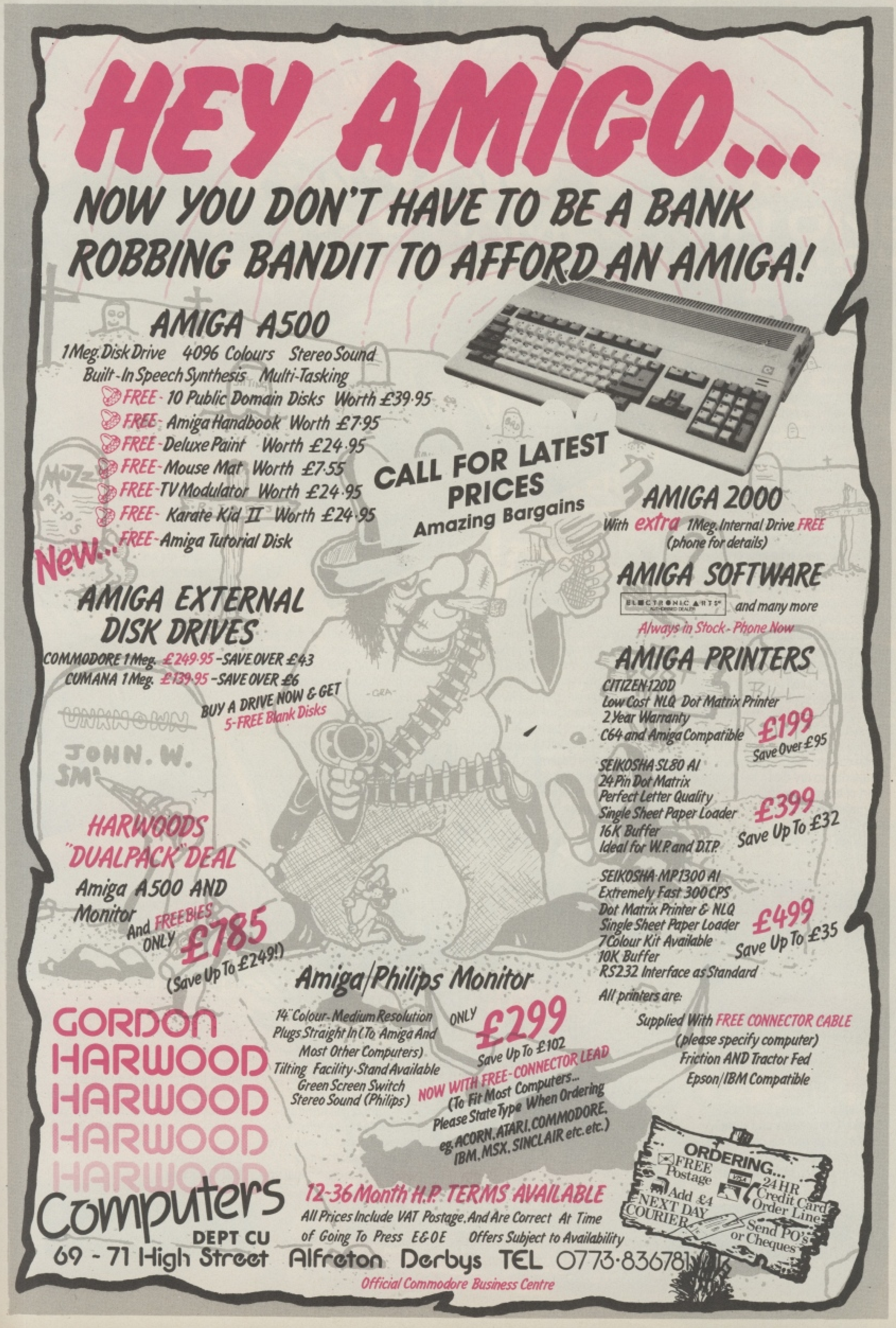
Barry Shene gets mean.



Graphically speaking, *Mean Streak* is rather nice actually, with silky smooth scrolling (a rare and precious thing these days!) and some very attractive sprites. Sound is also well done, and with the competition which gives you the chance to win a mountain bike (*v. Trendy bikes with large handlebars and matching price tags.*) for the one who completes it first, why am I not raving about it you may wonder? Well, it is enjoyable but only for a fairly short time. It hasn't got that addictive punch that an arcade game needs and neither has it the complexity needed for an arcade adventure, so it's left there oscillating with an ego crisis. But if you're fairly well off and in need of a rather short-lived bit of fun, go on be a devil. Oh, and er . . . Mirrorsoft I'll gladly give you a screen star . . . if you'll send me a mountain bike.

Ferdy Hamilton

Rating	Score (1–10)
Graphics	8
Sound	7
Toughness	7
Endurance	5
Value	7
Overall	**7**



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MANIAC MANSION



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Twenty years ago, a wayward meteor arced across the warm American night sky and ploughed into the backyard of a towering gothic mansion. A brief explosion followed, a sudden flaring of lighted windows, and then. . . . silence, broken only by the sound of the crickets.

So begins *Maniac Mansion*, the latest from Lucasfilm Games, and an affectionate spoof of mad scientist B-movies and campus splatter flicks. It's *Pyscho, Friday 13th*, the *Adams Family* and *Rocky Horror Show* all rolled into one; a story of chainsaws, shower-curtains, obscene phone calls, microwave ovens and mondo stereo.

It's also one of the new breed of adventure games, eliminating keyboard input by opting for a joystick-controlled cursor, which hovers over objects in the animation window and selects verbs and nouns from the vocabulary list at the bottom of the screen. It's fast, effective, and will probably have text-adventure purists up in arms.

In the depths of Maniac Mansion, the sinister Dr Fred has kidnapped Sandy Pantz, a cheerleader from the local college, and is apparently preparing to dry-clean her brains as part of his plans for world domination. Dave, Sandy's clean-cut boyfriend and all-round jock, gets together a search party of six fellow students, including streetwise punks, bookworms and surfer dudes, each with his or her own talents and obsessions.

From the six, two kids must be chosen to accompany Dave on his rescue mission, and how they go about thwarting Dr Fred depends on which students are selected. Not only will their individual skills be called upon, but their personalities will also influence events. Physics wiz Bernard (winner of the college geek award) might be handy when it comes to messing with the nuclear generator in the basement, but he's a definite liability when he comes up against the inhabitants of the house.

According to the instruction booklet, these inhabitants are 'weird', which is a bit like describing Hitler as eccentric. For starters there's Fred's wife Edna, an ex-health care nurse who's into electric cattle prods, and her son Ed, a paranoid self-styled commando with a hamster fixation. Then there's Dead Cousin Ted, embalmed and living in a sarcophagus.

This crowd are relatively sane when compared to the others to be encountered — such as the potted fern called Chuck, and a disembodied Green Tentacle who's a depressed hi-fi freak and wants to make it as a rock star. And there's a Nameless Something behind the scenes, an alien being who's pulling the strings and who's got something to do with the meteor in the backyard.

The mansion is a warren of rooms and corridors on several floors, and includes a photographic dark room, a recording studio, and a room packed with arcade coin-ops. Through all this moves your team of three, either independently or as a gang, doing all the usual adventure things — opening locked doors, picking up useless objects, completely failing to either solve the puzzles or to avoid the clutches of Fred & Co. Some problems — like using the hidden lever to open the generator room door — need two characters.

Fortunately, the programmers have done away with that infuriating convention which allows each character to only carry one or two items at a time, and Dave and his chums can stow away as many rotting turkeys, chainsaws, and keys as they can lay their hands on.

Much of the action is animated — at least to the extent that characters can walk up and down stairs and across rooms. More complex actions, like playing the piano or tuning in an antique radio, are represented by the character standing in front of the furniture with appropriate sound effects. And from time to time you're treated to a short film sequence of events elsewhere in the house. So that you get to see Sandy being menaced by a 'purple slime geek'.

With character interaction on and off screen, and all those large sprites to animate, it's not surprising that both sides of the disk get accessed continually. This doesn't hold up the action, and swapping sides is kept to a minimum.





Try a quick game of Alien Slime.



Outside the weird mansion with the gang.



Crooney kid examines the statue — it's a red herring.

At 15 quid *Maniac Mansion* isn't much more expensive than disk versions of other animated adventures (such as *Stifflip & Co*) and the opportunity for re-playing the game using different characters more than compensates.

But, ulitmately, *Maniac Mansion* is still an adventure game, and the flash graphics and black humour won't appeal to those punters who prefer the immediate delights of arcade games. Of its kind, it's one of the best around, and if, like me, you can eat this kind of stuff with a spoon, then you won't be disappointed.

Bill Scolding

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall

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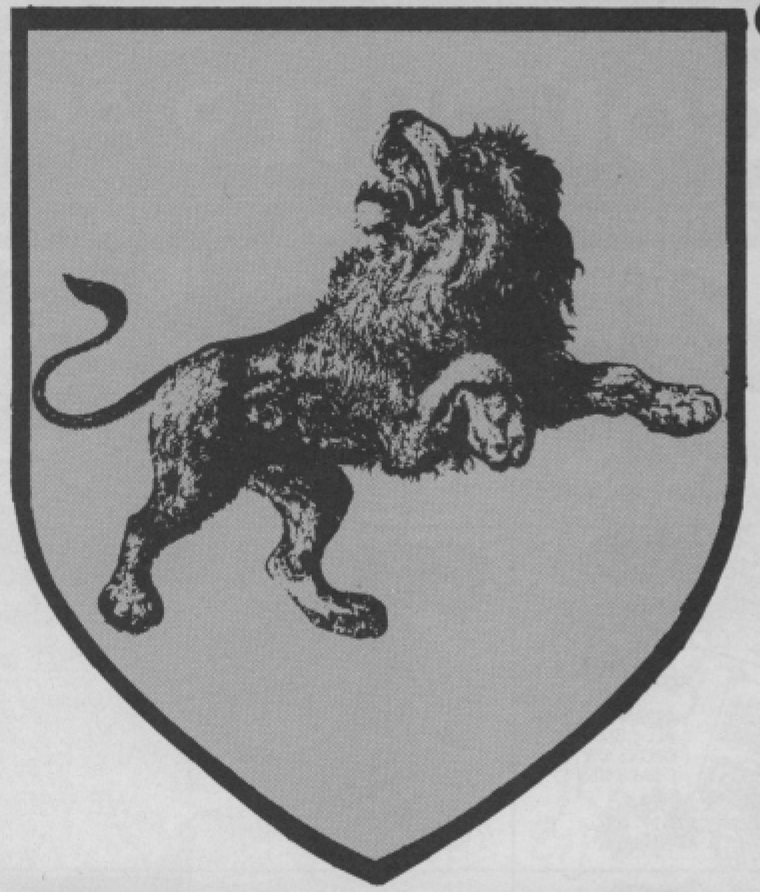
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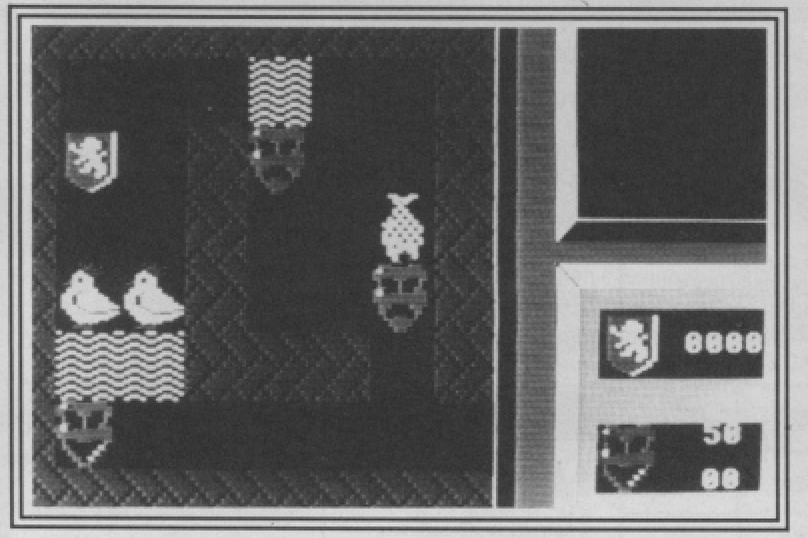


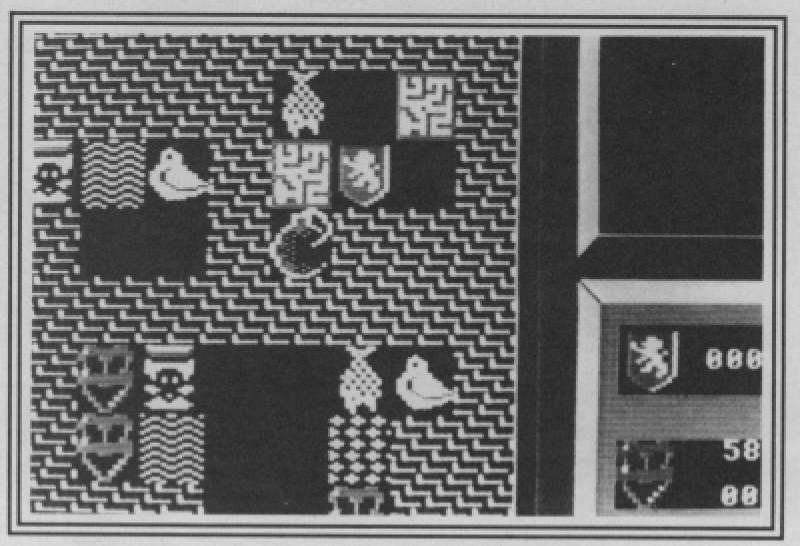
XOR



For those of you who don't know about these things XOR is a machine code instruction which manipulates bits of data. If you think that's boring you'll have to agree that this game is aptly titled. *XOR* is like a cross between a three year old game called *Boulderdash* which involved a lot of falling rocks, and a prehistoric thing for the ZX81 called *Mazogs*. In other words it's a maze game with things that fall on your head. In their day *Boulderdash* and *Mazogs* were pretty good, but things have moved on a bit since then haven't they?

There are fifteen mazes in all which, although they are similar in rough layout and design, have various different properties. All fifteen of them are displayed on a menu bar and you can start with whichever one you want. My advice is to start with the first one and work your way down — they get progressively more difficult. On completion of each maze you are given a letter. When you have all fifteen letters you are in possession of an encrypted clue to *XOR*'s true nature. You can send this off to Logotron for a certificate and badge declaring you a member of the Order of *XOR*. I can hardly wait.





The first maze is called dots and waves, which might have something to do with the two different kinds of force field barring some of the routes. You have control of two shields, one depicting a lion, the other with a chevron. Control is switched from one to the other by pressing the fire button. In this first maze there are 47 masks and you must collect the whole lot within a specified number of moves before leaving by the door and collecting a letter of the code. That's all there is to it.

Unusually, there are no spooks to chase you around, no sneaky traps, no keys to find. All that stands between you and the masks are these force fields. The dotty ones can be passed through horizontally and the wavy lines disappear if you travel vertically through them. The only problem arises if you need to go up or down through a dotty force field or sideways through a wavy one, in which case you'll have to find another route.

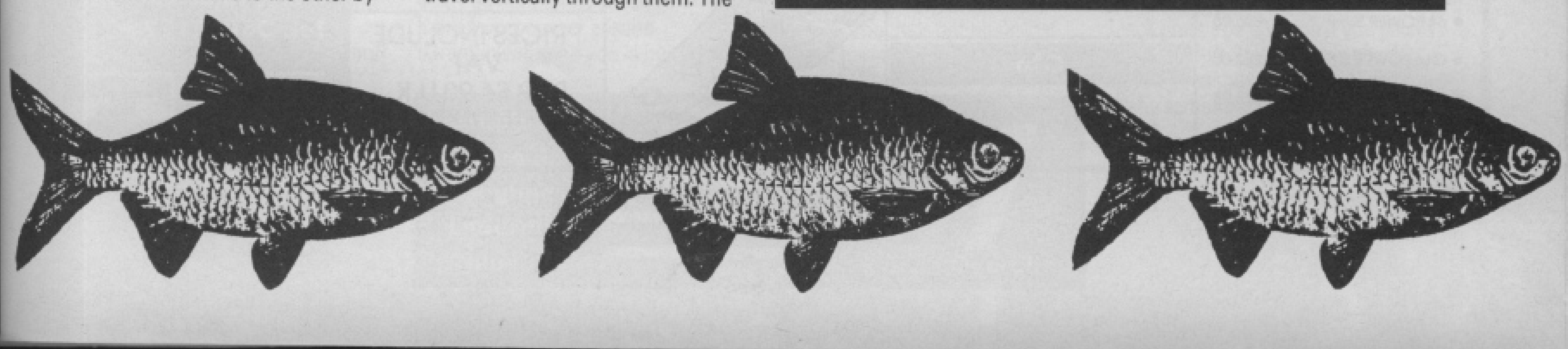
The map will help you find your way around, but to get all of it you have to pick up four map segment icons which are located in different parts of the maze. Unfortunately there is no map showing you where the map segments are.

The remaining fourteen mazes are based on the first with various things introduced to complicate matters. The first of these is fish. Fish are to *XOR* what rocks are to *Boulderdash*. They perch on top of maze walls and if you bump into them they fall blocking your only exit. Later on, fish can be used to explode bombs and make new paths, but you have to be careful you don't blow yourself up with them. A variation on the theme is spring loaded chickens which shoot off to the right or left when any obstacle is removed from their path. In the later mazes things can get very complicated. Working out the end result of removing a mask stuck between half a ton of fish and a dozen or so chickens is a time consuming business and the 'try it and see' approach inevitably ends in disaster.

XOR can definitely be classed in the strategy/tactical bracket, a game for people who like to think for half an hour before making a move. But does it have to be this dull? The graphics are very ordinary and the only sound available is one of those awful pink plonk beep tunes which sounded pathetic even five years ago. The best thing that I can find to say about it is that it's 'O.K., but nothing special. My mate Malcolm liked it, but then he's from Newcastle and wears a bright yellow waterproof.

Ken McMahon

	Scale	Overall
Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	5
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	



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Jack is back pumping up the needle on the Naughtyometer.

Gremlin had a surprise success a year or so back with a naughty number called *Jack the Nipper*, can the sequel possibly kick up as much fun as the first game?

For those of you who didn't take my trusty guidance and buy the first game (it was awarded a screen star) our hero, Jack, well he's a nipper, but what a naughty little nipper he is. In his first taste of stardom, did he try and save the human race? Did he try and rescue a damsel in distress? No, not on your life, he spent all his time running around his home town causing as much mischief as possible, be it by injuring the residents with his pea-shooter or short circuiting the computers in the local sprocket shop.

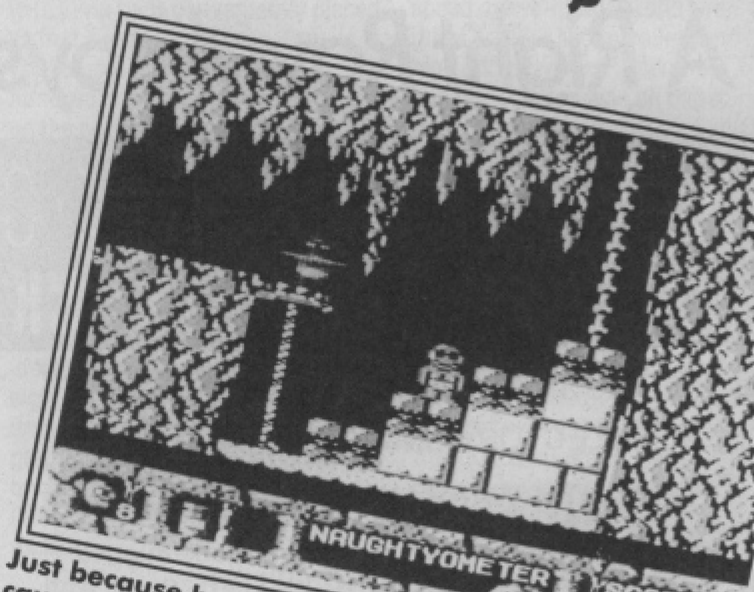
Well, obviously the antics of this not-so-loveable brat did not amuse the townsfolk a great deal, and it wasn't too long before Jack was evicted and sentenced to life with kangaroos, koalas, and Paul Hogan (Yuk!)

As you can guess there was no way our hell-raising hero was going to stand for that, so while on the Australia-bound plane he leapt out over an unknown wilderness, using his over-sized nappy as a parachute. Now you control Jack on his ventures in the unknown jungle and try to cause as much mischief as possible without getting caught by Mummy and Daddy and getting a botty-spanking!

The game is set over a much larger area than its predecessor, which was only around ten screens or so. It is also much more of an orthodox 'pick up/drop/shoot/jump' arcade adventure than the rather brilliantly abstract original game. The main part of playing the game is really based on surviving the jungle horrors such as the hostile tribesmen, or the nipper-eating plants, rather than causing major mischief to residents. Jack can however pick up weapons, bouncing coconuts are among those found, these can give anyone a real headache, or choose the blowpipe. There are also bombs which can cause major hassle if let off in the right place.

However, the best mischief is not to be had through blasting things. As in the first game there are many plain looking objects lying around that can be turned to good use. You can hold any two objects at one time, should you be holding a 'correct' pair in the right place then you will be the catalyst to some serious whacky happenings. The objective is to boost your naughty-o-meter until you are a real mean mother instead of the little wimp you originally start out at. The way to boost the meter is to do some real nasty deviant tricks not simply lob a few coconuts around. (Gremlin will send you 'a guide to good mischief' if you ask nicely!)

As you begin to find your way around the vast jungle you will encounter various problems such as alligator-infested swamps, and even the odd troublesome tourist (cameras, check trousers and all!)



Just because he wears nappies doesn't mean he can't cause havoc — he can.

You will also encounter many things to your aid, invincibility potions, and extra lives (even the nine you are given aren't enough). One of the most important things to get you around in the jungle are the "Beam me up, Kelly" transporters — although they can't be seen so you'll have to find them by the systematic approach of trial and error.

Jaque le Nippierre as hei is commonly known in France, was one of last year's most colourful characters but he's definitely lost some of his 'street cred' with this.

With many sequels all you seem to end up with is a mixed and diluted version of the original, this sadly is the fate of *Coconut Capers*, it simply doesn't have the spunk of the original.

Witty gameplay has been foresaken for a more conservative, mediocre approach. Graphics are well done, with many nice touches (Jack gives you a V-sign if you pause for too long!) Sound, too is good. But as goes the old saying "Too many screens spoil the brat." (Eh?-Ed.)

Ferdy Hamilton

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

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Yipes! another arcade conversion. But this is no recent mega licence, in fact it harks back to mid '85. *Buggy Boy* was a great game at the time though, helped along by its three screens giving a really wide-angled view of oncoming traffic, fences, trees, rocks and so forth. *Buggy Boy* nowadays strikes me as being the forerunner more than anything else of *Out Run*.

There are four courses and one practice track. Each one apart from the practice track is divided into stages, for which you are given seventy-five seconds to zip through in your dune buggy, which has a cute way of bouncing around the track as you accelerate. Sadly where Elite have tried to fit the three lanes onto one screen the graphics have been noticably shrunk down to accommodate the compression down to a single screen for the computer version.

None of the features have been lost in the transference from the arcade version though. You have excellent features like footballs which can be rammed out of the way for bonus ponts, jump pads which do just that and leave you realistically bouncing out of control after landing, and ramps which, when ridden over, tilt the buggy onto two of its side wheels (it stays like that providing the vehicle is not steered to much.) Speaking of steering, the Japanese would be interested in the design for this buggy, the road handling is so good no matter how tight the bend if you just let go of the joystick it will steer itself through the trouble spot (gripe, gripe, sorry Elite).

Some nice effects have been included in the game though, great touches like tunnels and bridges have been faithfully reproduced. The tracks are well designed too, with jump pads conveniently placed so that if used, there is no way you're gonna reach that five-hundred point gate just coming up on the horizon. And there's flags as well, sadly they mostly seem to cover large rocks. Large buggy-crunching rocks.

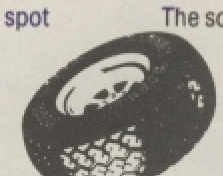
You either like conversions or you don't. And because of the complexity of arcade machines nowadays it is increasingly harder to 'downgrade' onto the conventional eight-bit micro. But Elite have come up with a little gem here. The graphics are very well designed with one or two little faults here and there, such as glitches and wobbly rocks.

The sound is adequate but still confined to being the same old droning noise which seems to rear it's very ugly head in absolutely every single car/race game I have ever played. Could I recommend an ancient two gear buggy with a top speed of two-hundred and twenty miles an hour slick scrolling and high addictiveness? Of course! Initially it takes a wee bit of getting into, but afterwards I'm sure you'll have no regrets at purchasing this game.

I hope *Buggy Boy* will set an example to other companies and they will forget about major TV/Film tie-ins and hydraulic mega arcade machines and get on with converting the arcade classics that have previously been overlooked. *Buggy Boy* is good, probably one of the most accurate conversions to date. If you're a fan it's a must, if you're not, it's a must.

Mark Patterson





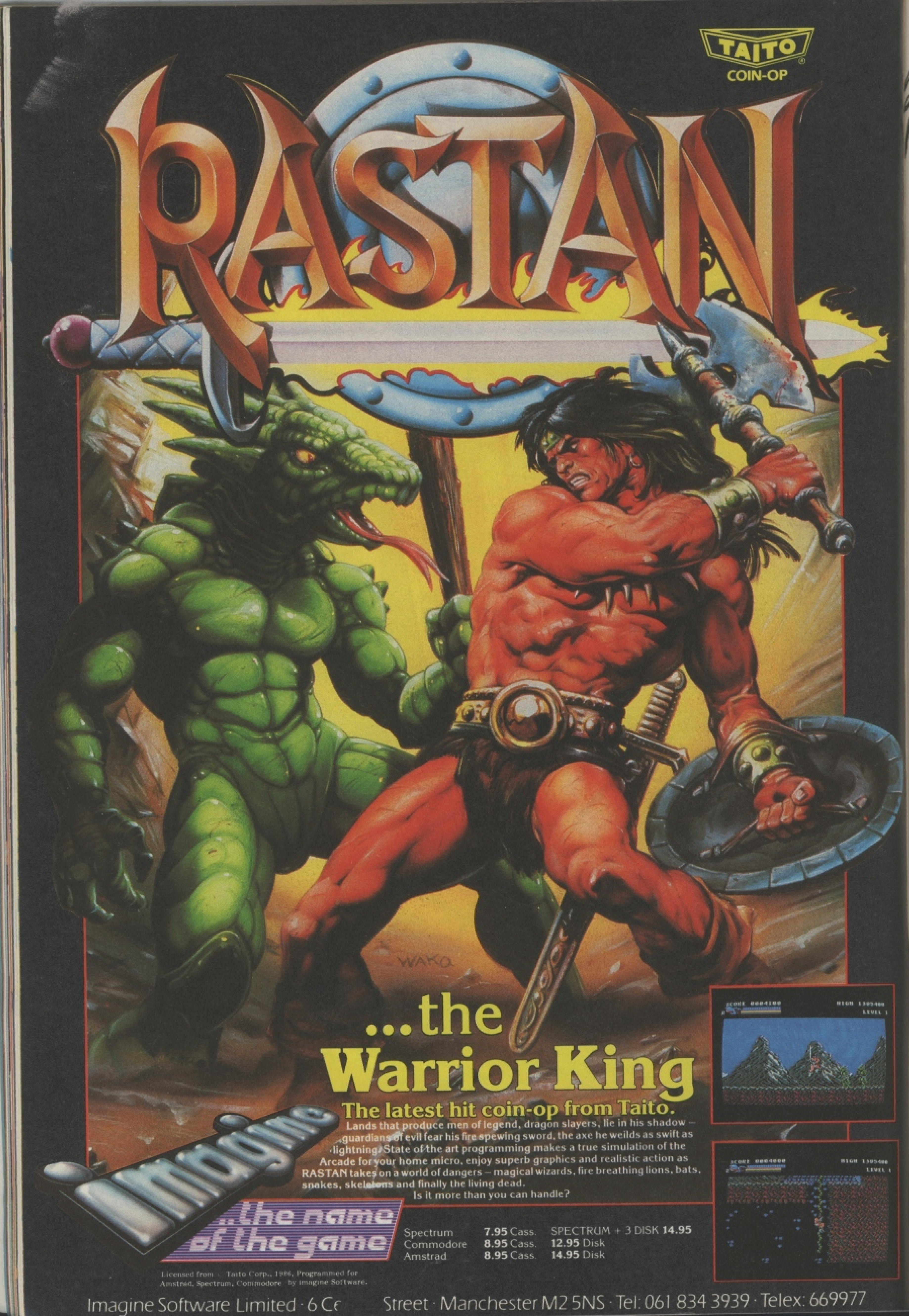


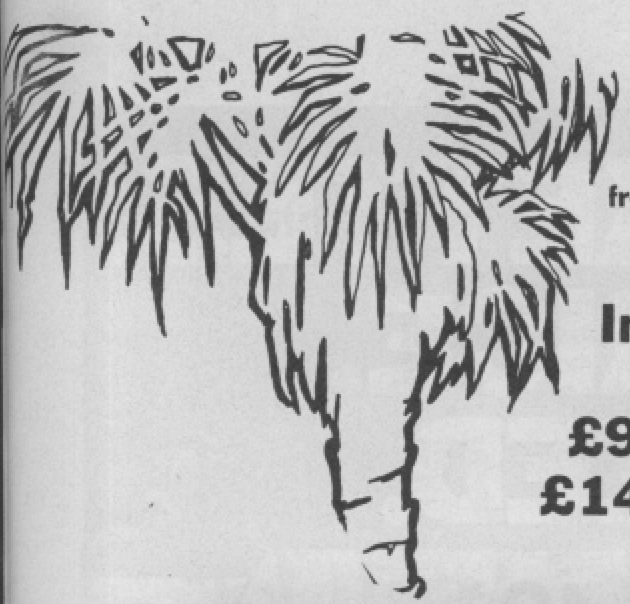


C.U. Screen Star

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall


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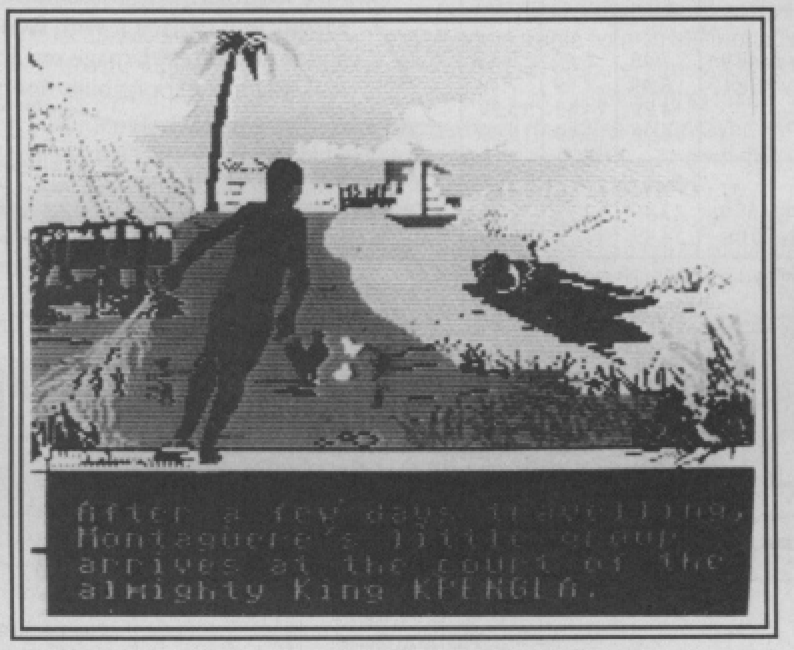
PASSENGERS ON THE WIND 2

Remember *Passengers on the Wind*, reviewed in August? This was the game that, according to its excitable publishers Infogrames, promised 'a software revolution, the revolution of the film in which you are the hero'. Marvel at the 'exceptional quality graphics' they commanded, 'live moments of poetry and wonder.'

The trouble was, although the graphics were indeed impressive, the rest of the game wasn't. Tedious gameplay, an incomprehensible plot full of anonymous characters, peculiar dialogue translated from Idiomatic French — all combined to produce the software equivalent of the sub-titled movies that Channel 4 puts out when no-one's watching.

Just about the only things which stopped the game disappearing like a pebble in a bucket of merde was an astonishing high nipple-count and a short-lived moment of glory in the *News on Sunday*. Well, this hasn't deterred the indefatigable French, who went right on and brought out the sequel, ingeniously titled *Passengers on the Wind 2*. Like part one, it's based on Francois Bourgeon's comic strip 'masterpiece', and is the continuing story of Isabeau, an 18th century nobleperson, and her attempts to regain her lost title and riches.

The screen format and gameplay remain the same, with a large graphics screen which displays the scenery of each location, onto which are overlaid comic strip frames when the action hots up. Below this is the portrait window, used for selecting the characters you wish to control, and the text window which reveals their thoughts and speech. Selection of icons is by joystick or keyboard-controlled cursor, and often entails unnecessary precision particularly at the start of each episode, where you must embark on a frustrating search across the landscape to find the single pixel which unlocks the action.



▲ Nice view, wish the gameplay was as clear.



Six of the seven episodes take place in West African slave colonies, and the plot, less sprawling than that of part one, has our heroine taking part in archery contests and bloody voodoo ceremonies, trekking across the lion-infested savannah, and generally dispensing wit, repartee and a few philosophical thoughts about slavery. And there's a bit of animated snogging, baby snatching and duelling for good measure.

To complete the story you must get all the characters speaking in the correct sequence, and saying and doing the right things. But no clues are given to help you, so your choice is often arbitrary. Should Aiuan or Isa shoot the lion? Is Hoel well enough to go to France or not? Does Isa gets some shut-eye or go skinny-dipping in the river instead?

Just to make things entirely impossible, some active ingredients have been hidden in the pictures, so that in episode two, for instance, you have to pass the cursor over the grubby neck of the ancient mariner. There's no earthly reason why you should even think of doing this, but if you don't then Jasmin starts groping Alihosi, Isa misses out on some juju action in episode four, and Hoel snuffs it in episode five.

To add to the confusion, each episode concludes with a wise man popping up from nowhere and asking questions reminiscent of school exam papers, and which are supposed to help you on your way: 'In this story, which bird is the symbol of honour? To which Isa replies, 'A guinea fowl, I suppose can also be found in Asia.' What?!!

While some recognition should go to Infograms for taking software into unexplored territory, all they've produced is at best an interesting but unsuccessful experiment, and at worst a muddled travesty of a comic strip of entertainment value. whatsoever. I can't possibly think of who might want to buy it; owners of *Passengers Full of Wind 1* will obviously stay well clear, and no-one else will have the slightest idea of what is going on.

Bill Scolding

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4 Overall

64/128
Databyte/ Mindscape/ DesignStar
Price: £14.95/disk £9.95/cass

SUPERSTAR ★★★ ★ ICE HOCKEY

Ice hockey can hardly be classed as one of Britain's most popular spectator sports, which probably explains why there have been so few home computer interpretations of the game. Anirog's (now Anco) *Slapshot* is the only other game of this type that springs to mind.

Superstar Ice Hockey is billed as the first complete ice hockey simulation, which basically means that the designers have attempted to capture all the thrills and spills of a 'real' ice hockey league by incorporating as many rules and play strategies as possible.

There seems little point relating the rules to the uninitiated — suffice it to say, ice hockey is essentially a bastardised version of soccer on ice, with a puck instead of a ball. The puck isn't kicked — it's manipulated with a stick. (And GP's a poet — and didn't even know it Ed.)

In *Superstar Ice Hockey* the opposition can be controlled by flesh or microchip, or a combination of both. With the exception of the coaches, centres (sic) and goalies, the computer always syncronises the team's actions. Alternatively you can leave the computer to control the centre or goalie, or to make the coach's decisions regarding simplistic offensive and defensive strategies.

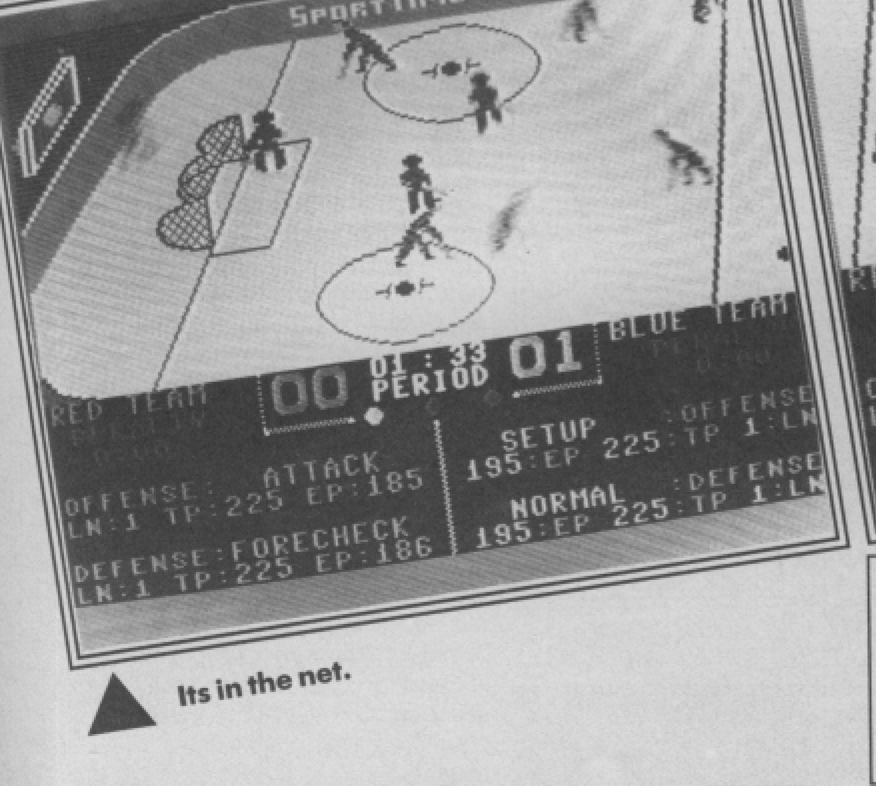
A human player can control two of the three variables — but not the centre and the goalie together. Being able to control only one player out of the whole team is one of *Superstar Ice Hockey*'s most annoying flaws. Control is never transferred to other team members, as in, say, Andrew Spencer's *International Soccer,* and subsequently playability is further marred by the fact that the screen follows the progress of the puck, not that of your player. Worse still, the centre is slow to respond to joystick input and movement is inertial — which means that the skater takes an excruciatingly long time to turn.

While this may arguably be deemed realistic, it's far from conducive to a playable environment. When it boils down to it, there's little point in attempting to make any computer simulation so realistic, as reality is full of many tedious, mundane actions which we peform instinctively. And when you're trying to relax and enjoy yourself playing a computer game, you don't want to have to actually think about something you would otherwise take for granted.

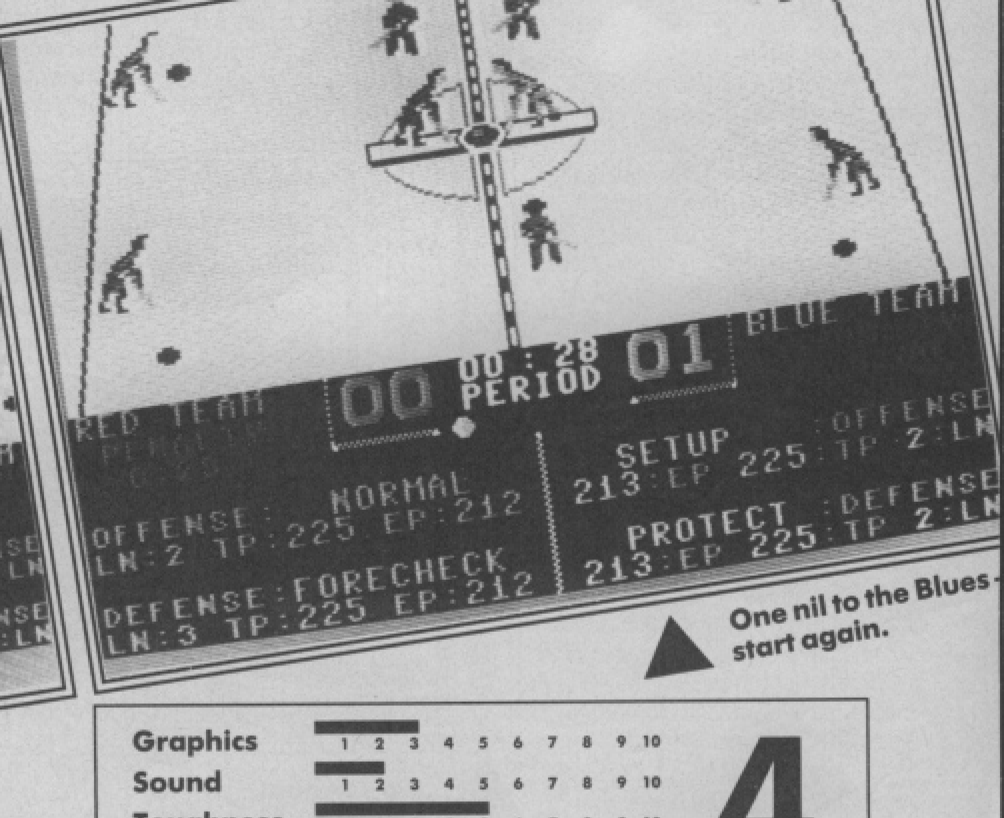
Rules and strategies, for example, are far easier to relate to and execute in a real game of hockey than in a joystick controlled simulation. And anyway, using a joystick to choose a strategy from a limited selection is hardly realistic.

There just isn't enough playability in *Superstar Ice Hockey* to make it entertaining, and the lack of atmosphere and rewarding strategy is poor compensation for anyone interested in ice hockey. Designer Ed Ringler ought to take a leaf out of Andrew Spencer's book. *International Soccer* is a prime example of how to capture the flavour of a sport in a computer game — the emphasis is on atmopshere and playability, not accuracy.

Gary Penn



▲ Its in the net.



▲ One nil to the Blues — start again.

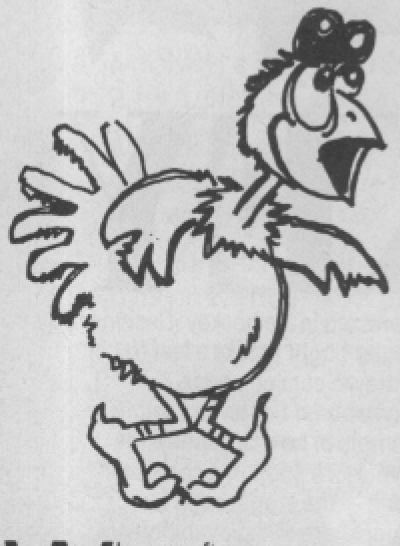
Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4
Overall



MAD BALLS

64/128
Ocean
Price: £9.95/ cass



When a software company like Ocean pays good money for the licence to a load of rubber balls, then things are surely getting desperate.

The balls in question are Mad, and they're not really balls so much as disembodied heads, with protruding tongues, bulging red-veined eyes, horns, warts, scars and fangs. They've got cheerful names like Slobulus and Swine Sucker, and appear occasionally on children's TV when the adults are safely out of the way. A spokesperson for Ocean described them as 'pretty gross'.

On the computer screen, however, they're about as stomach-churning as Bobby Bearing with a hare-lip. They inhabit a world of pavements, dustbins and gym equipment known as the planet Orb, and they spend most of their meaningful lives trying to bounce each other off the walkways and into the net which is suspended below.

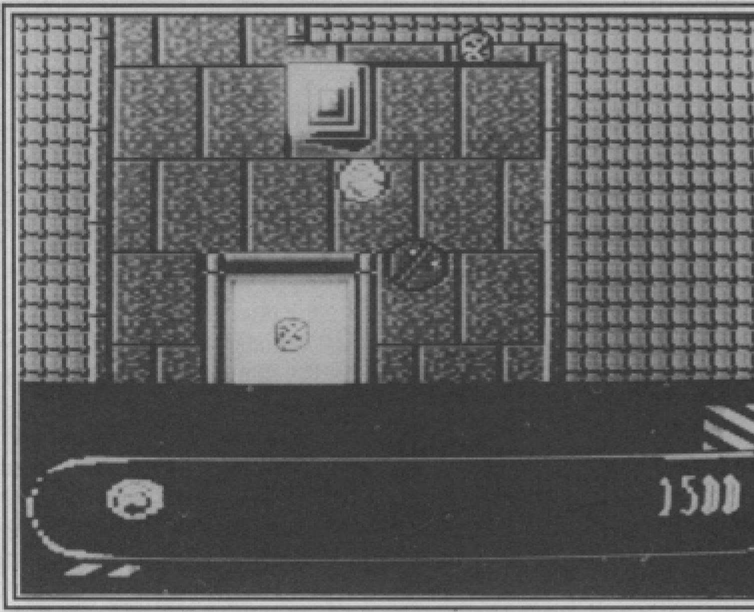
Fortunately for everyone concerned, the programmers who've been give the thankless task of somehow making a game out of all this are Denton Design. They've succeeded in producing something that is so well presented and playable that you almost forget how stupid the whole thing is.

For starters, the Dentons have opted for a novel overhead view of the action, so that instead of watching the balls bounce along from the side, what you see are balls which get bigger as they bounce high, and smaller as they fall back to earth.

This is a bit weird at first, and after an hour or two it can do strange things to your eyes, but overall it works very well, and the effect can be quite startling, especially when a ball zooms off a trampoline for an extra high bounce.

Once you've orientated yourself, you can get down to the serious business of mugging other balls and exploring the tricky terrain. To begin with you're controlling one particular Mad Ball called Dust Brain, who sets out to find the seven other Mad Balls, and recruit them into his gang by knocking them into the goal nets.

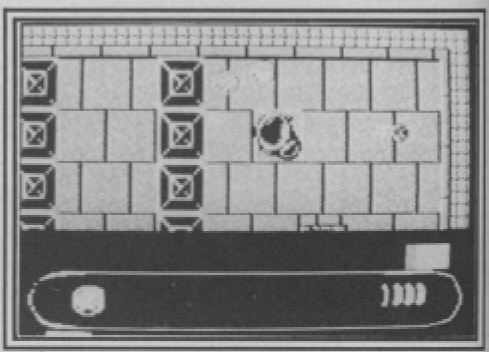
The maze of paved paths is riddled with holes and chasms, and there are dustbins, pyramids, catapults, springboards, rubber tyres and eggs to bounce over or on-to, all accompanied by suitable sound effects. Bouncing over this obstacle course would be bad enough unmolested, but as it is, your progress is usually hindered by unfriendly balls trying to spin you off the path.



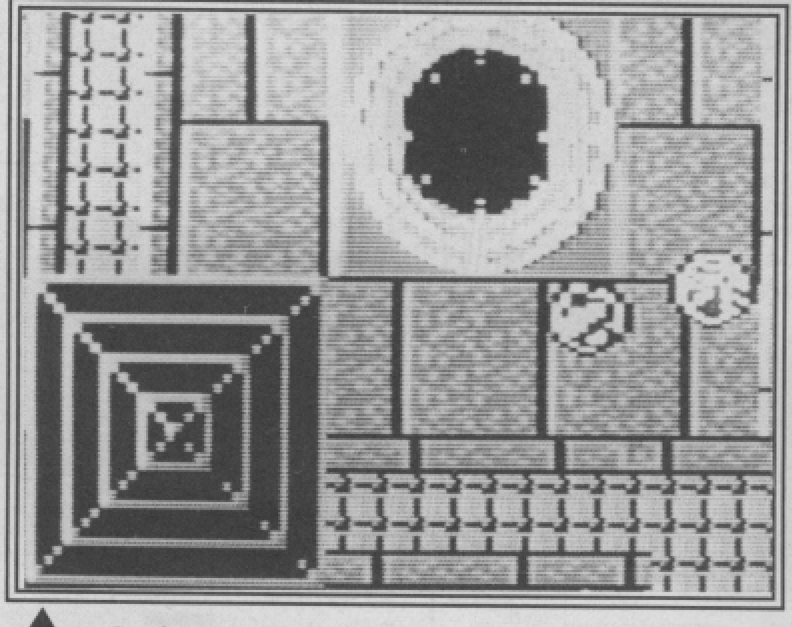
Get extra lift from trampoline.

You'll soon discover that most of the attacking balls aren't Mad at all, but featureless balls called 'bureaucrats'. Booting them into goal scores a few brownie points but otherwise doesn't get you very far. Every time you mug a genuine Mad Ball, however, he rolls down a tube to join any others you've captured, bobbing up and down patiently in a window below the playing screen.

Each Mad Ball has its own peculiar characteristics — Screemin' Meenie is a super-fast weakling on a strict coke diet, while the slower-moving Slobulus is much stronger and dines only on cabbages. This adds an important strategy element to what is mostly a joystick-busting arcade game, allowing you to swap the ball you're playing with for a captured ball which is better suited to the environment and the scattered food supplies. So Dust Brain can be exchanged for another by dropping him down an open dustbin to join the captured Mad Balls, knocking the last in line out of the tube and back into play again.



A load of balls.



Go for goal.

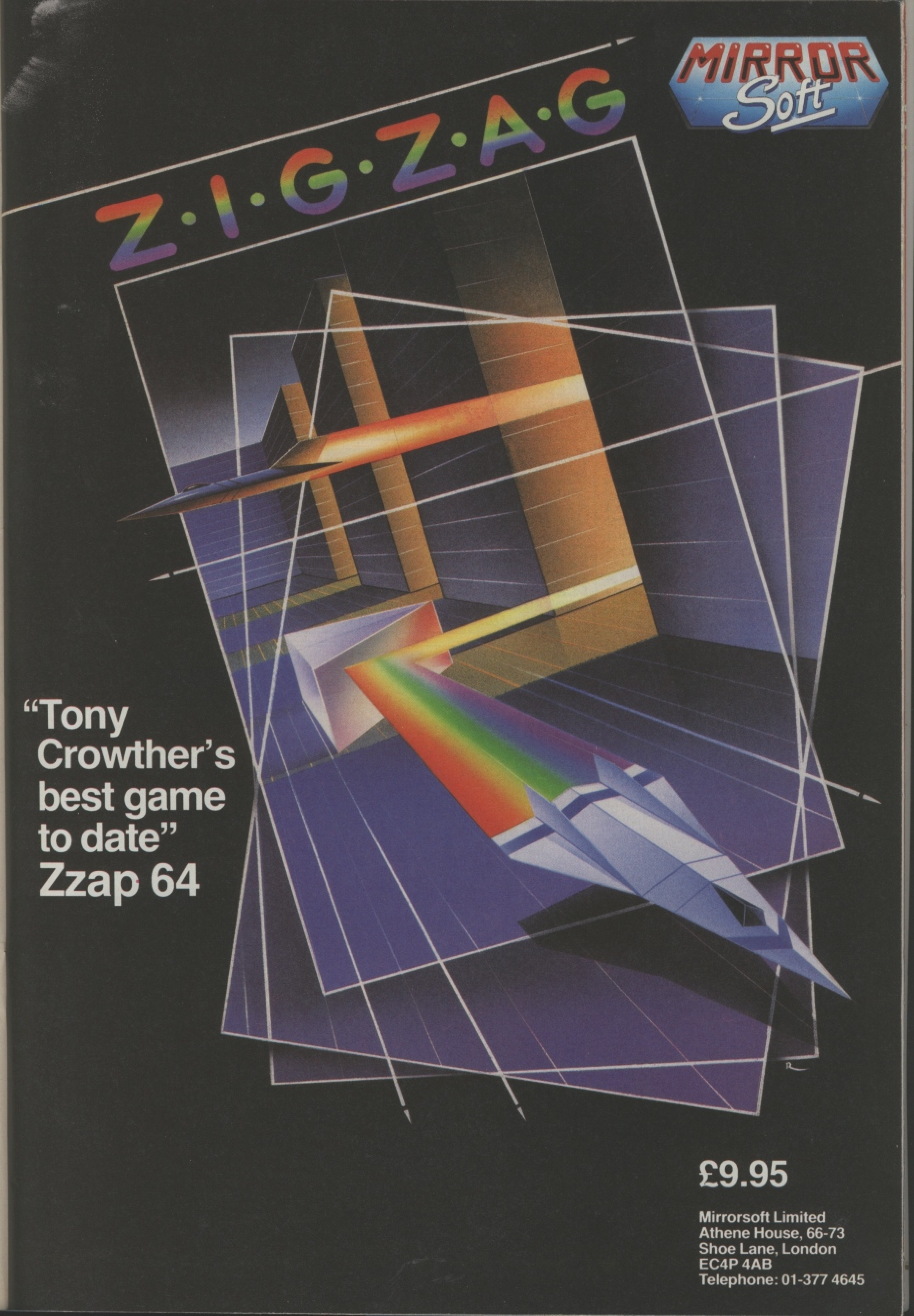
A lot of attention to detail has been lavished on this staggeringly mindless game, which is crammed full of nice touches, like the clang! as you bounce onto a dustbin lid, and the tiny chick which scampers around frantically, just after you've released it from its egg, and just before you stomp on it. Keyboard and joystick control is responsive and realistic, simulating very well the unpredictable rebounds and bounces.

I can't remember the last time I had so much fun bouncing severed heads in and out of dustbins.

Bill Scolding

Rating	Scale
Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

7 Overall


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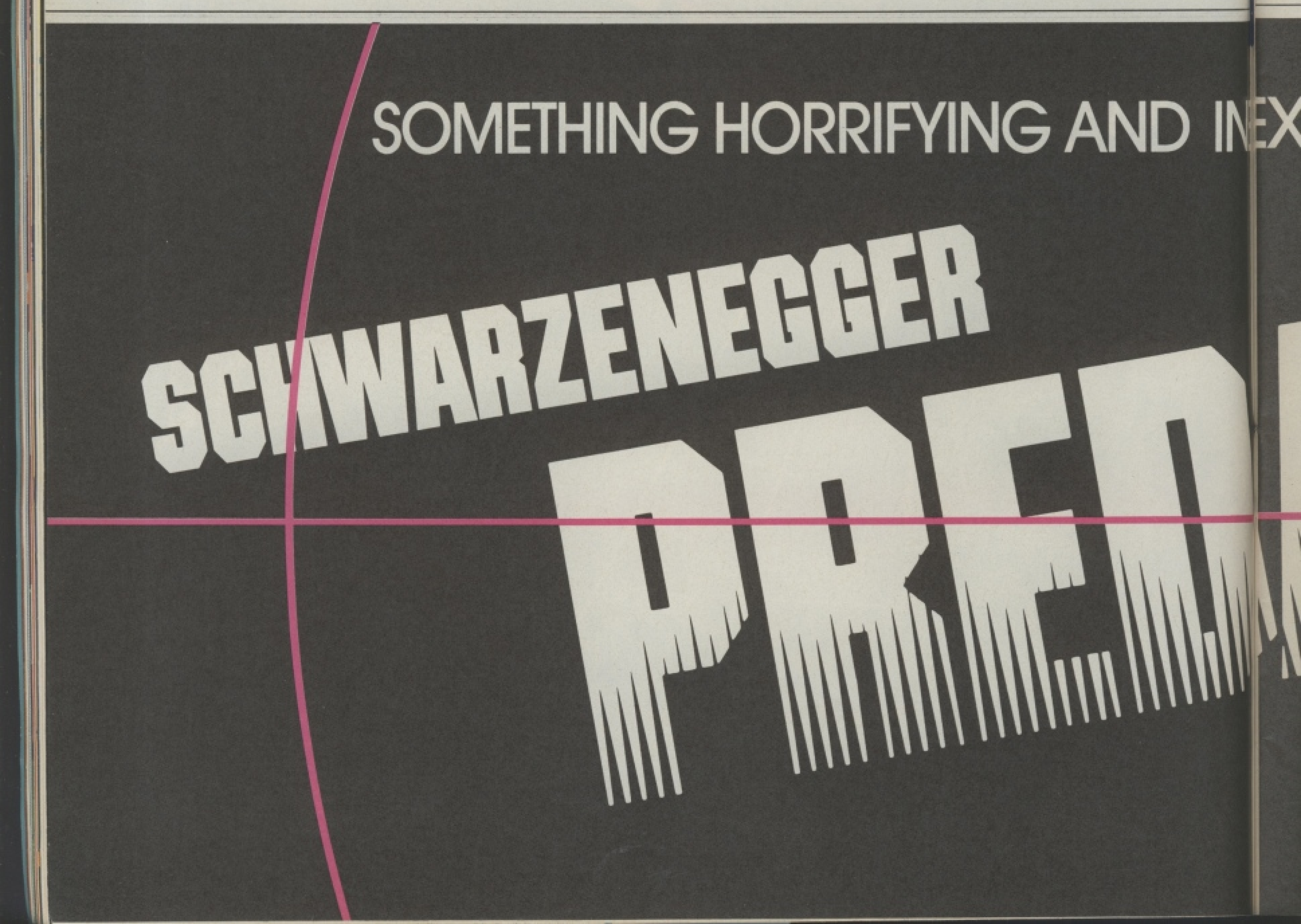
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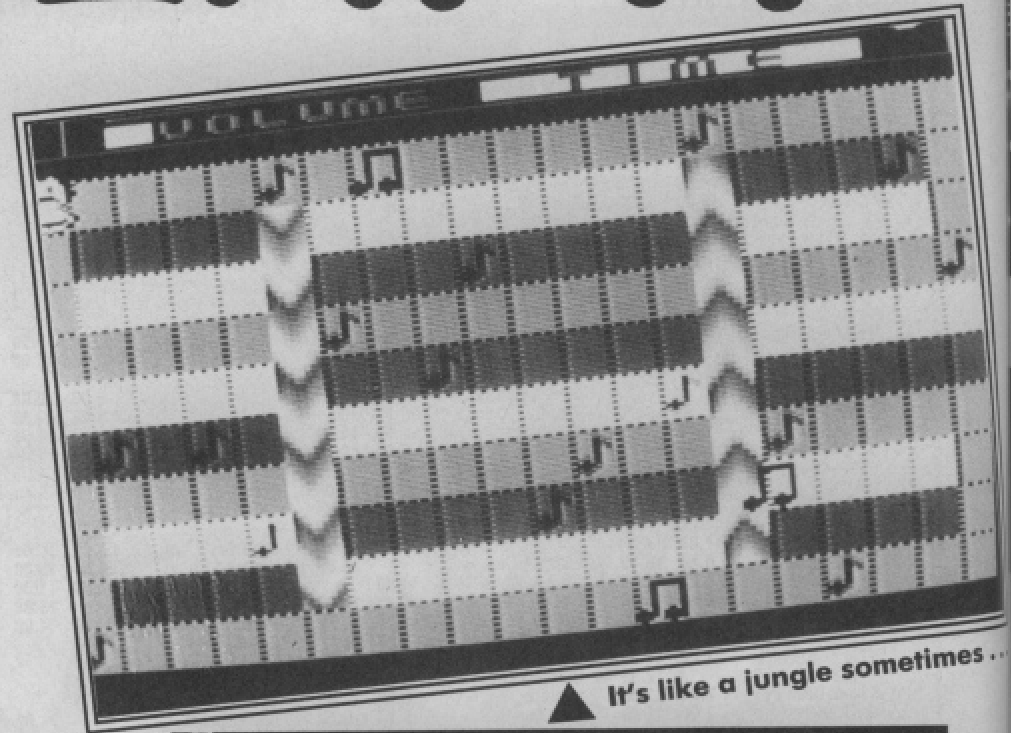
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64/128
Mastertronic
Price: £1.99/ cass

BEAT IT

Now I've played games from Mastertronic
and some of them are great, and some of them are chronic,
and some of them are junk and some of them are jive,
and some must've been written by a child of five.
But now listen to me and what I'm rappin'
This little number's gonna get your footsies tappin'.
It's a musical maze arcade game and it's called *Beat It!*
And if I ain't wrong it's gonna be a hit.
The aim of the game is short and it's simple
(and could've been written on the head of a pimple)
rockin' Rodney and Rachel are right little ravers
and you gotta help them to pick up all the quavers
'cause at the start of each screen you hear a drum machine
and a poundin' bass riff — if you catch my drift —
but this background beat ain't too hot 'n' punky
so you gotta add some notes to make it REAL funky.
There are 16 notes in each psychedlic maze
of shifting paths and patterns going every which ways
and every note you grab gets added to the beat
'til the song gets stronger and the boogie gets neat.
Now if this was all then the game would be naff
but there are various meanies hoppin' up on each path.
Hit a few bum notes and your tune will start to go
like a three-note solo from Status Quo.
There are gloom masks and coppers who turn your volume down
and bombs, frogs, and Angries who blow you outta town.
If you run into a fuzz box your tune will be distorted
and don't mess with Norm or Maggie or your plans will be thwarted
Now if you finish Level One you've got no time for restin'
'cause there's another 59, and I ain't jestin'.
And some you'll find a doddle, and on some you'll wind up dead
and Level 42's real boring (*well what do you expect? Ed.*)
So pin back your shell-likes and listen to this rap,
Beat It! is really something — it ain't no pile of crap.
The animation's cool, and the graphics are really neat
and for all you wimps out there it's got an infinite lives cheat.
You can't play it with the keyboard but you can play it with a 'stick
you can play it until those groovy colours nearly make you sick.
You can play it all night and you can really have a ball
you can play it 'til that disco beat drives you up the wall.
'Cause if there's one thing wrong with this fun 'n' funky game
it's those bloody boogie rhythms goin' round and round your brain.

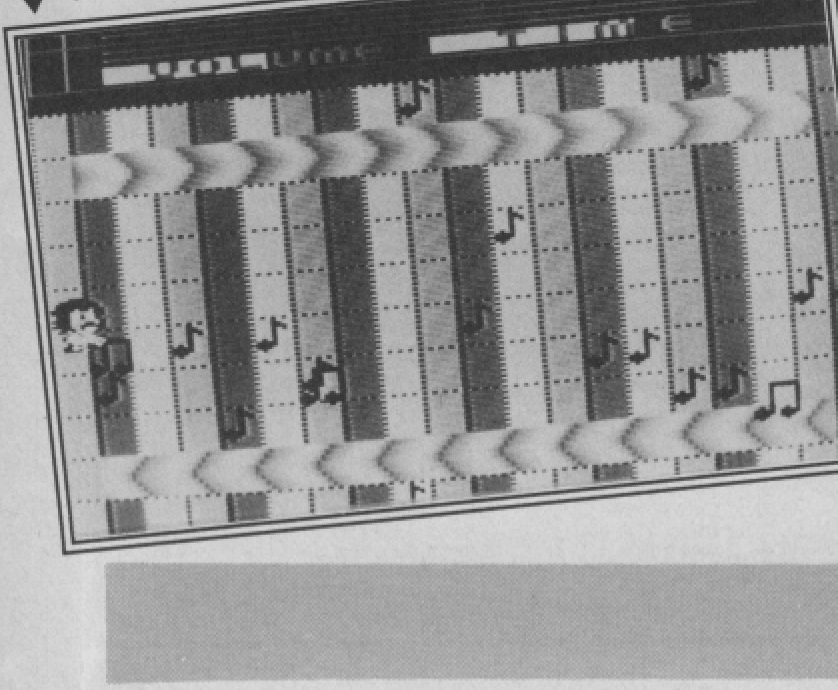
Bill 'cut the rap' Scolding



▲ It's like a jungle sometimes ...

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Graphics							■			
Sound							■			
Toughness							■			
Endurance								■		
Value									■	

7 Overall



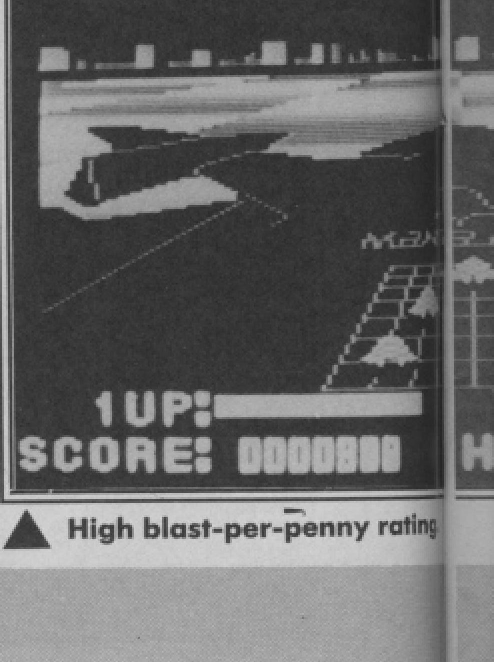
▼ No sleep till highscore!

64/128
Price: £2.99/ cass

KRO

Mastertronic's game-naming team must have worked overtime on this one. *Kromazone* is an above average name for a game, but not quite in the Twiglet Zone league. Like most Master T games these days, it features a naff little game to play whilst the main game is loading, complete with Rob Hubbard tune. My, how things have advanced. I remember when flickering loading screens were state-of-the-art (*you old git—Ed*).

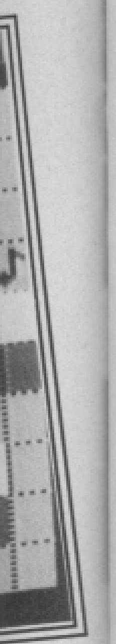
Kromazone, as you already know, is the most feared testing ground of the Terran Space Fleet Naval Academy. Only the best pilots, ie the ones who know their hand signals, are allowed to test their skill and determination to the absolute limits.



▲ High blast-per-penny rating



▲ To reach the unreachable town.



nes . . .

STARLIFTER

64/128
Price: £1.99/ cass

You can't expect much in the way of sustained entertainment from budget games, but the good ones should keep you occupied at least until Bob's Full House has finished. And *Starlifter* fits the bill perfectly.

It's one of those two-way horizontal scrolling jobs in which you blast anything that moves, that's if you can survive the storm of bullets that seem to appear from nowhere, flying across the screen in both directions.

Since Mastertronic are usually pretty good with their stories, I'll let you in on the scenario, which involves the evil Peradusians who are slugging it out with the allies on the forgotten planets of Farantoo and Seratzo. My view on this is, if they're forgotten, they can't really be worth all this blasting, but 2150AD politics were never my strong point.

Anyway, you have to destroy their cargo vessels which, like the convoys in the Gulf, are protected by fighters. Cargo vessels blow you up if you touch them, but the fighters blast back at you, so the best strategy is to blast both of them without dithering about which is which.

You are set a target of vessels to blast in each level, indicated at the bottom of the screen. Sixteen is the first target, and you go up in jumps of four on successive levels. Every 5,000 points you get another life. Pretty standard stuff really. I was hoping for more blasting power as my points total went up but it looks as though a single-fire laser cannon was all the allies could muster. Maybe the Peradusians have slapped on an arms embargo.

As I said, the screen scrolls in both directions with a backdrop of large spaceships lined up in a row, looking rather like an interstellar traffic jam. Your one-man fighter (it looks like an astronaut with a jetpack on) can fly both ways, as do the nasties.

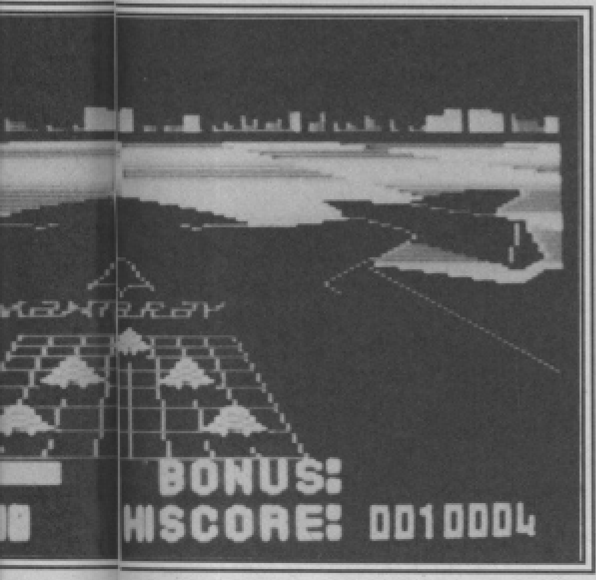
Cargo ship nasties are bigger, slower and easier to hit because they fly more in group formations. Fighters are a bit brighter than this, and will do pretty dodgy manouvres. Some of them, funnily enough, look just like your own ship. On higher levels, you have to blast all the fighters before more cargo ships will appear.

That's it really. The backdrop traffic jam changes a little on each level, as do the colours shapes and formations of the nasties. The only real challenge is making the high score that gets you another extra life. But for two sovs, who's complaining? I liked *Starlifter*, it's well up to Mastertronic's cheapo standards.

Bohdan Buciak

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	**7**
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Overall

OMAZONE



rating.

And what do they get when they finally make the *Kromazone*? a multicoloured badge. So the whole thing looks like being a worthless exercise — which sums up this game very well.

Kromozone is not one of Mastertronic's better efforts. It looks reasonable, as they all do, but playability is about as good as a plastic football pitch. There's really no scope for showing off your skills.

Your view is the front cockpit of the ship. Your task is to avoid or blast the wide range of nasties that come hurtling at you. It's a bit like driving a car through a shower of hailstones (for hailstones substitute golfballs). The terrain is of the checker-board type with a cityscape horizon that never gets any closer. You know, like the ones you get in road racing games. All the screens are the same, with just the background colours changing.

On the first level, you don't even get firepower. So all you can do is steer your way through the golfballs. A direct hit loses you one of your five levels. On successive levels, your laser cannon is activated. This is of the variety that shoots a beam from both sides of the screen to a fixed point somewhere in the middle. You have to decide whether to steer clear of the nasties or to wait until they're in range of your blaster.

There's nothing much else to do except to proceed up the levels avoiding and blasting ever more frantic waves of space debris, what's more annoying is that some of the nasties can fire at you from behind. There's absolutely nothing you can do about this (you can't see anything from behind), and it seems to me to be just a dirty underhanded way of losing you more lives.

To be fair, the nasties are graphically impressive, so is the overall presentation in general. There's a good tune and a two-player option. But none of those can compensate for the tedium of the gameplay. Not for me, this one.

Bohdan Buciak

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	**4**
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	Overall

64/128
Digital Integration
Price:£9.99 cass/£14.95 disk

BOBSLEIGH

If my experience is anything to go by, most people's idea of a bobsleigh is anything from a tea tray to a bin bag. The absolute killer, if you can get away with it is the fridge door. Expect stiff penalties if you're caught though.

No such mucking around with Digital Integration's *Bobsleigh*. Like all their simulations this is serious stuff featuring very expensive gear and all the best snow spots this side of the alps. DI have gone to their usual trouble to ensure that everything is as it should be.

If you've played *Winter Sports, Winter Events*, or anything like that, then you'll have a good idea what this is all about. I must admit to being just a bit dissappointed that *Bobsleigh* featured action and graphics no more impressive than any of its multi-event predecessors. In fact it looks very familiar. All the effort here has gone into making the simulation as real as possible, not in terms of the run itself, but in what you have to do as a team manager to get to, and win the Olympic games. So if you already have *Winter Sports* with its bobsleigh run, but are looking for improved realism in the action sequences, you'd better look somewhere else, *Bobsleigh* doesn't have it.

So what does it have? Well, it has six authentic tracks — St Moritz, Konigssee, Innsbruck, Winterberg, Calgary and Brueil. It has a choice of different types of bobsleigh and different types of runner for varying weather conditions. It has financial realism; you must pay for everything including fitness training, colour co-ordinated team gear, repairs to your bob when your write it off through careless driving, two tennis racquets in case you have to walk to the bar and a pair of ear muffs in case your bobble hat blows off. It also gets the thumbs up from the British Bobsleigh Association and Nick Phipps and Alan Cearnes, who, apparently, are pretty good at the real thing.

Off the track the whole thing is menu controlled. To begin with you will need to decide what kind of event to go in for, what kind of bob to try and kill yourself in, and whether you want to buy additional goodies like fitness training, steroids, tracksuits and the like. As a beginner your won't even get a look at the olympic course until you're rich enough to buy an olympic bob and finish in the top three at the world championships. In the early stages its best to go for the single events, moving on to six event seasons when you've at least got the skill and confidence to reach the end of the track without a major disaster. At this stage it's probably as well to pick up a little training which will give you the strength to push the bob faster to begin with.

When you've done all that there's nothing left but to give it a go. In bobsleigh you get to do the run twice (whoopee!) and your two times are added together.

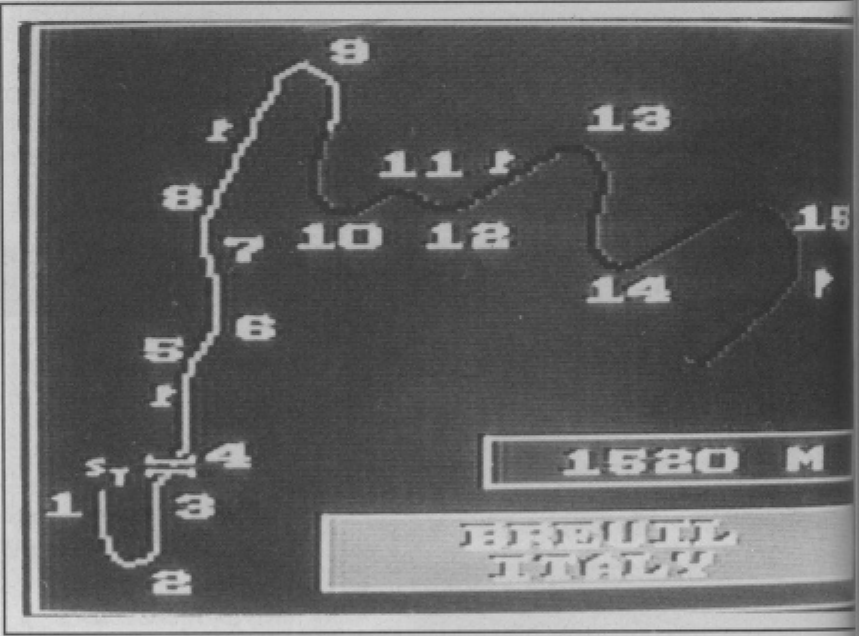
All the hard work comes at the beginning, where all you can see in the action window is the stationary bob with two little hands clutching the rail. Yes its time for a push start. The matrix board above your head indicates 'Get Set', turns red, then a green 'GO' signals the off and its wiggle-the-joystick-like-a-looney time. Thankfully this only lasts a few seconds, or 50 metres, at which time its a good idea to press the fire button and jump in. Ommision of this crucial part of the proceedings will result in the bobsleigh attempting the run without you. It's not very good at it.

From here on down it's just a question of keeping the thing the right way up and pointing in the right direction, which is a lot more difficult than it sounds. The trick is to anticipate the bends and find the smoothest line possible though them. Crashing into the side walls, if it doesn't stop you altogether, will slow you down considerable. Outside the action window is displayed a speedo, a split time indicator which records your progress at the quarter, half, and three-quarter stage intervals, the track record and of course the current time. In the likely event of your cocking the whole thing up and attempting to finish on your bum, you can get a map showing exactly where on the course you copped it.

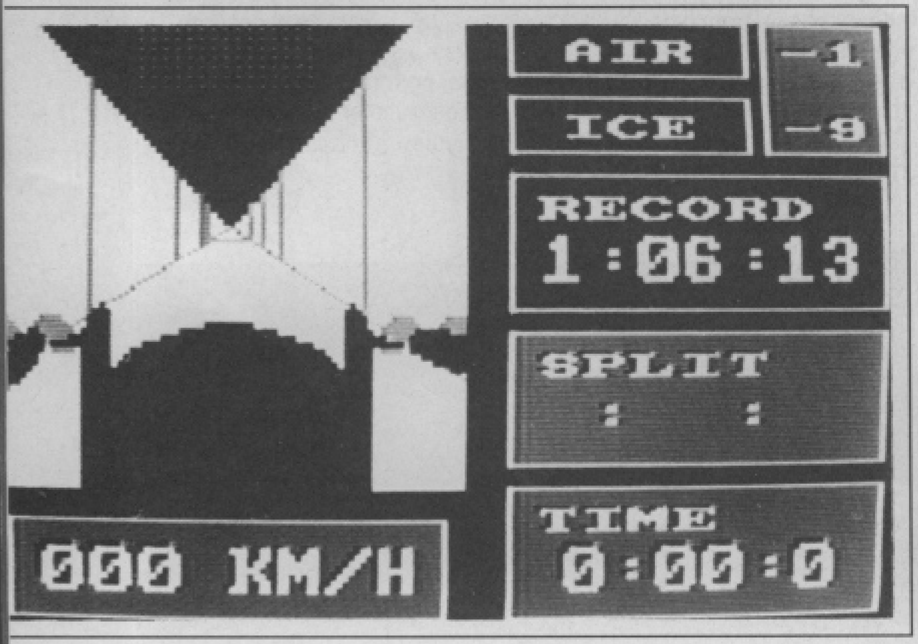
Once you become competent at getting down in one piece without the French, Swiss and Germans sniggering at your appallingly bad time, the thing becomes a lot more enjoyable because you can then start accumulating sponsorship money, racing to win, and aiming for that Olympic gold. DI have done their homework and I've no doubt that all the details are in there, but for me that didn't make up for the disappointment of seeing the old 'bob standard' Cresta Run style display, I was expecting something new and this just didn't cut the ice.

Ken McMahon

▼ **The map will show you where you crashed.**



▼ **Give the bob a good push to get going.**



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6 Overall



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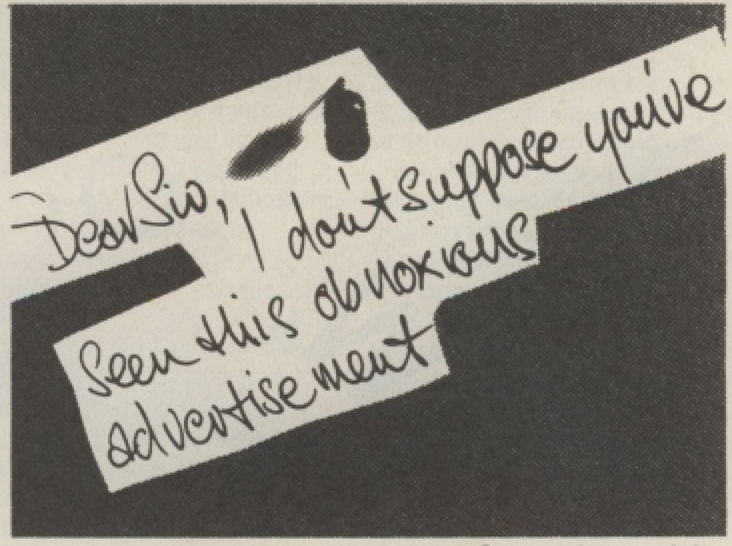
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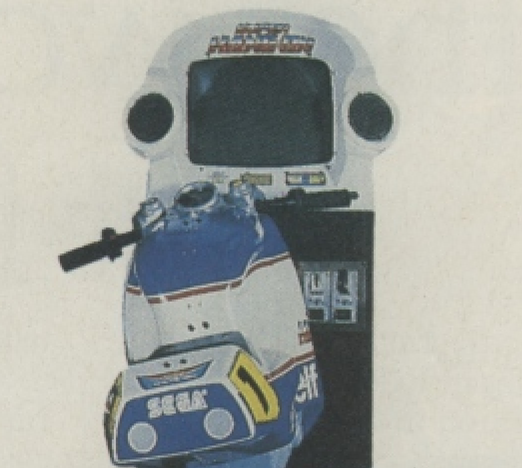
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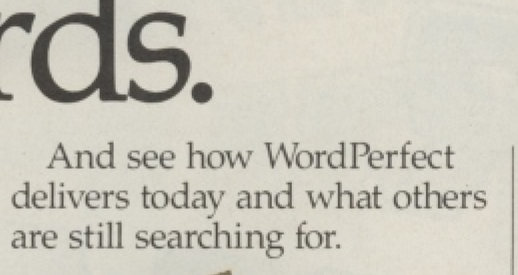
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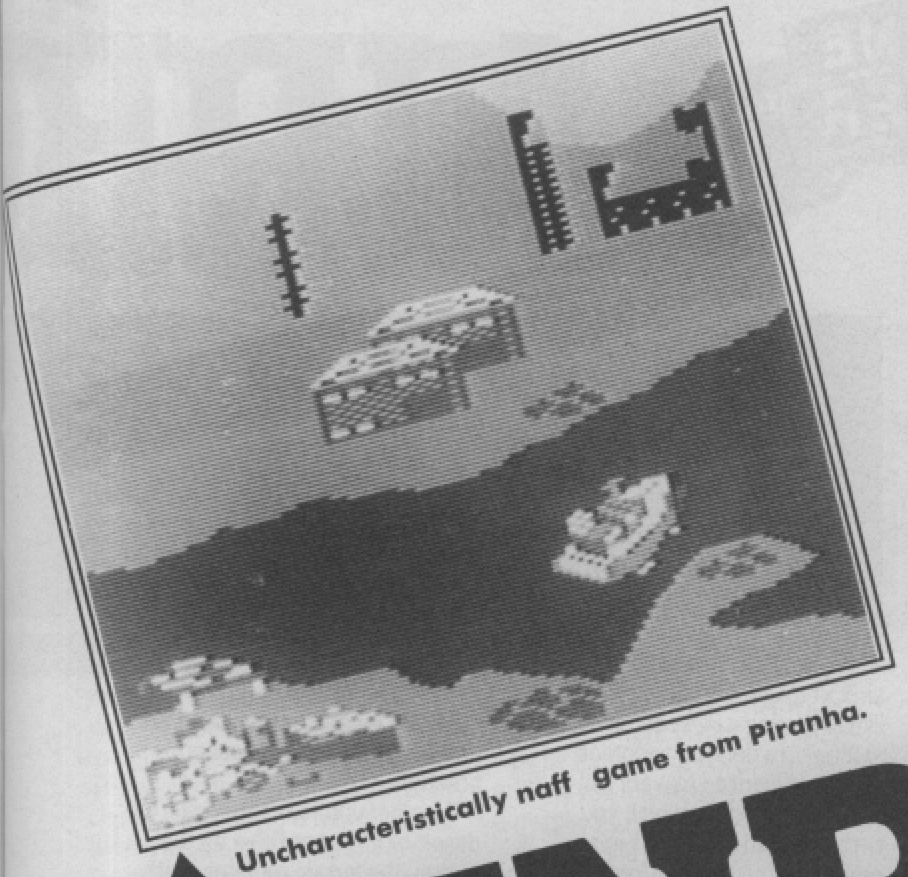
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Uncharacteristically naff game from Piranha.

GUNBOAT



Graphics don't improve much on River Raid.

64/128
Piranha
Price:
£13.95/disk
£8.95/cass

Five Ways began producing software almost four years ago, effectively launching book publishers Macmillan into the computer games market with their sailing, rally driving and athletics simulations.

Their latest production, released on Macmillan's Piranha lable, is a horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up that puts you in control of a heavily armed, super secret gunboat. The objective is to negotiate the enemy's maze-like inland waterways, and destroy four major naval bases.

Not surprisingly, your intrusion into enemy waters does not go unnoticed, and progress is hampered by a profusion of aggressive warships, helicopter gunships and shore batteries — all of which shoot to kill.

A panel at the bottom of the screen displays the boat's fuel and ammunition levels, its speed and its engine condition. Damage is repaired and fuel and ammunition levels are replenished by docking at the enemy depots dotted about the waterways.

The gunboat can rotate clockwise and anti-clockwise, and can move either forwards or backwards. You are armed with cannons, heat-seeking missiles, torpedoes and depth charges, all in limited supply. The fire button activates the cannons, whereas the other weapons are launched via the keyboard.

This arrangement is more often than not inconvenient to say the least — it's not much fun trying to manoeuvre the boat while launcing missiles, torpedoes and depth charges, especially when the action hots up. Playing with keys only doesn't make the going any easier either.

Control is sluggish and means that the enemy is invariably presented with an easy target. Fortunately, the action is predictable, with enemy craft appearing and firing at exactly the same positions each time you play.

Sound is sparse, simplistic and frequently irritating, and the graphics are on the whole bland. The scrolling is as smooth as sandpaper, with the screen juddering quite badly at times — especially when the boat stops to allow the scenery to catch up. Gunboat is a very dated product in ever respect, and sadly lacks the playability and polish of previous Piranha releases. Hopefully, their impending batch of licensed software won't suffer the same fate.

Gary Penn

	Rating (1–10)
Graphics	3
Sound	3
Toughness	8
Endurance	3
Value	4
Overall	**4**

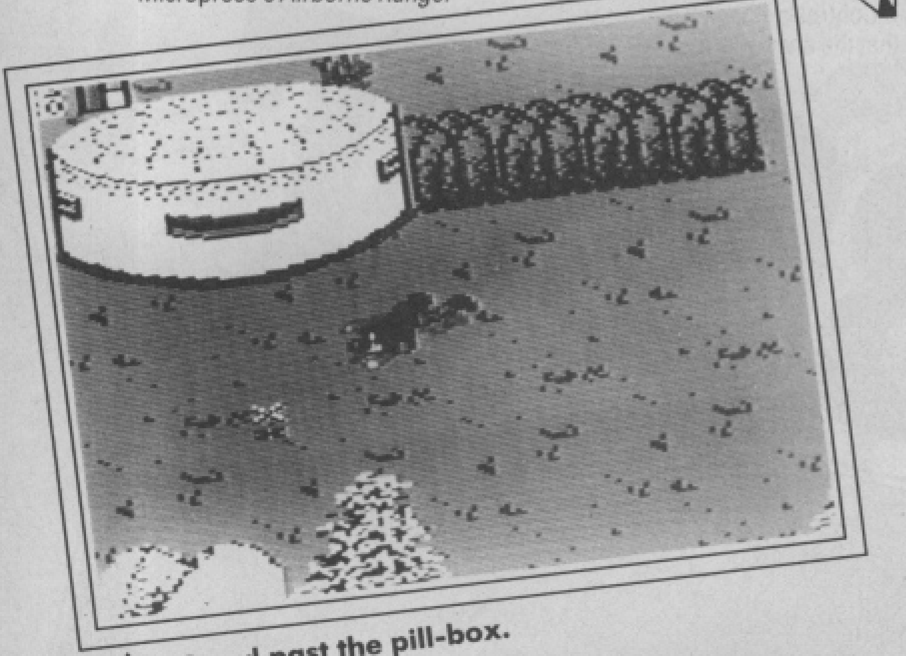


AIRBO RANG

64/128
Microprose
Price:
£14.95/cass
£19.95/disk

It says here that to become an Airborne Ranger you must be able to climb the toughest mountains, survive for five days in the blazing heat of the desert and then undertake guerilla warfare in the jungle. Doesn't sound that tough to me, but I can eat three shredded wheat.

Microprose's *Airborne Ranger*



Crawl past the pill-box.

isn't just a survival test but a series of missions designed to let you use both your zapping and your strategic skills. It's not one of those boring war games, nor is it an out and out blaster like Commando.

It's the best of both worlds, allowing you full control over your severely crew-cut soldier in a range of 3-D scrolling terrains, with the emphasis on sharp thinking and fast reactions to get you through. There are 12 missions in all and you can play them either in practice mode or as a real veteran ranger.

The difference between the two is that in practice mode your score won't be registered on the Veteran Ranger Roster. As a veteran, if you complete a mission your soldier is saved to tape or disk for future use.

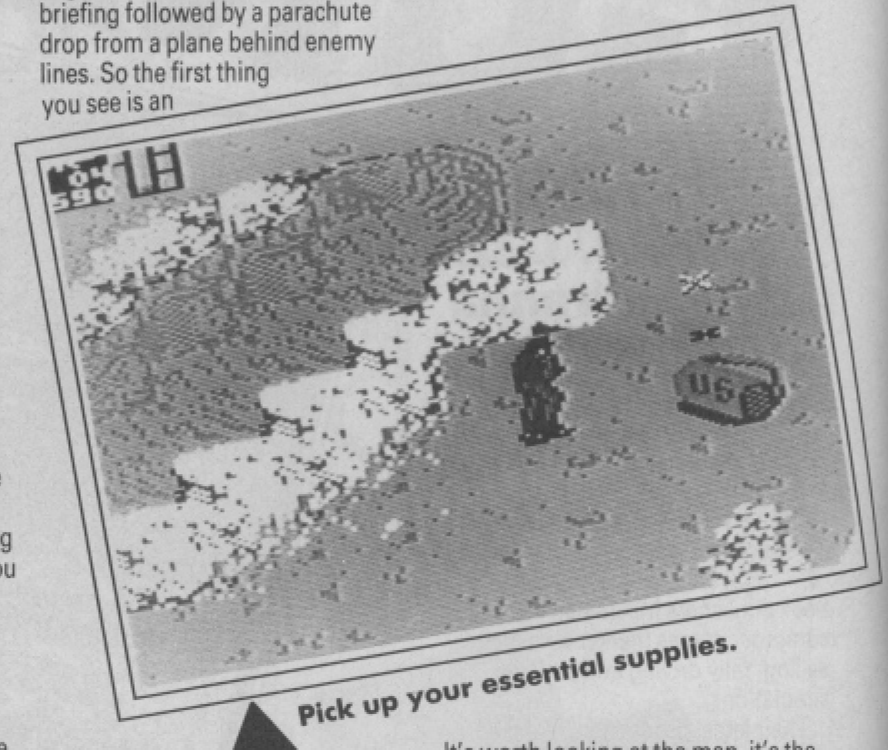
The 12 missions are graded in three stages of difficulty. Some are based in Arctic conditions, some in the desert and the rest in temperate zones. You can choose from simple missions like capturing an enemy officer or disabling an enemy aircraft to slightly trickier missions like liberating a POW camp or setting up a delayed sabotage.

More advanced players will go for campaign mode in which you complete all 12 missions in a predetermined order. Come through on one of these and you'll need scaffolding on your jacket to hold up the medals.

Whatever the mission, you always begin it the same way, with a briefing followed by a parachute drop from a plane behind enemy lines. So the first thing you see is an aerial view of the terrain scrolling upwards as the plane flies over. You must eject three supply pods wherever you think is the best place for them and then jump out when the green light goes. The parachute is joystick controlled so you try not to steer it onto a minefield — bad start.

You always land at the bottom end of the terrain. Since, in most cases, the object behind your mission is at the top end it makes sense to space out your supply pods evenly along the route. They're essential for success because they provide not only extra weapons but first-aid.

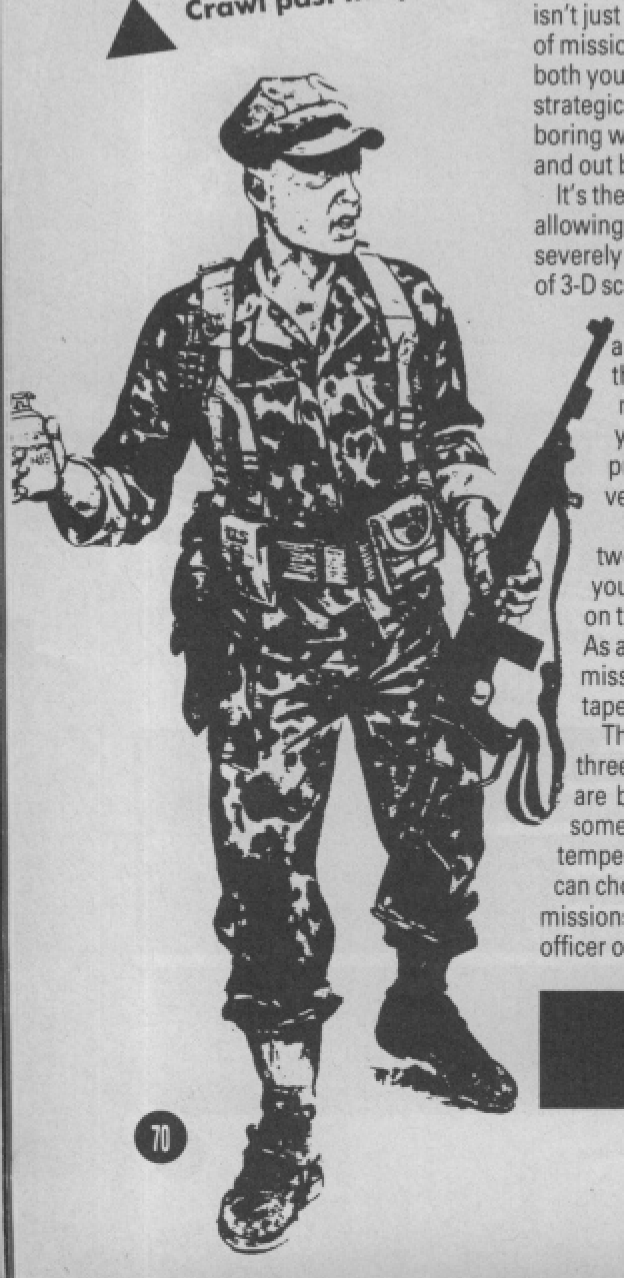
Whether you're in the Arctic, the desert or anywhere else for that matter, the terrain remains pretty much the same, consisting of trenches, minefields, machine-gun posts, watery bits and barbed wire. Pressing a key brings up a map that shows your position in a wider area.

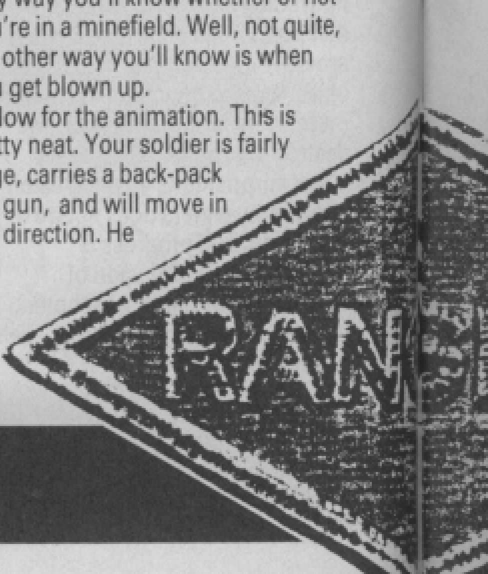


Pick up your essential supplies.

It's worth looking at the map, it's the only way you'll know whether or not you're in a minefield. Well, not quite, the other way you'll know is when you get blown up.

Now for the animation. This is pretty neat. Your soldier is fairly large, carries a back-pack and gun, and will move in any direction. He



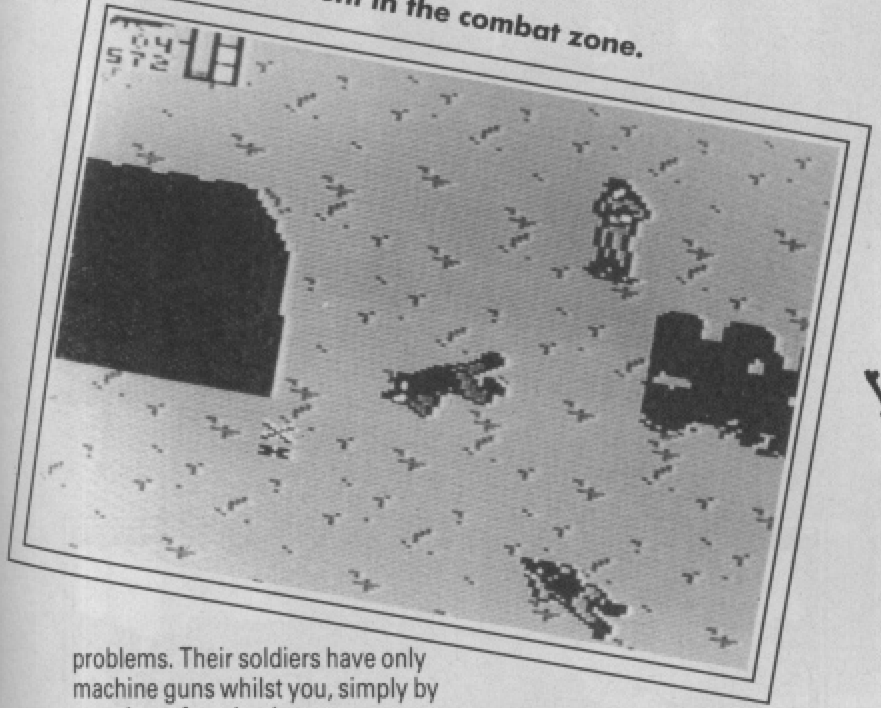


BORNE NGER

4TH AIRBORNE RANGER Co.

can run, walk, crouch down and wriggle around on his stomach using his knees and elbows to move. The wriggling movements are pretty classy. But running is much less so. In fact, it's more a scamper. How can the gooks take you seriously when you do a spritely skip up to their machine-gun post?

But the enemy has its own



Engagement in the combat zone.

problems. Their soldiers have only machine guns whilst you, simply by pressing a function key, can summon up a whole armoury: knife, grenade, missile or your trusty carbine. To add to their problems, the gooks have this bad habit of stamping their feet, so their boots tell you they're around before you even see them.

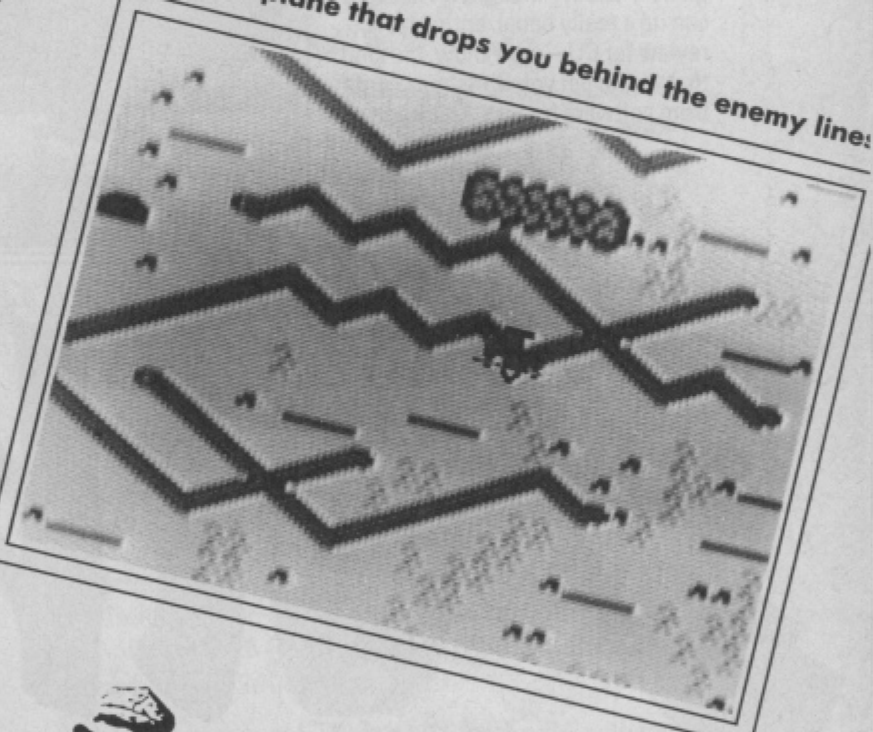
Your man is joystick controlled and there's a gunsight constantly hovering in front of him whichever way he turns. So to fire at the enemy, you merely line up the gunsight and press fire.

Now for the tactical stuff. All the missions are difficult and they need thinking out if you're to get back alive. The chunky manual explains each mission and gives a few hints to get you started. For example, in both the 'disable a plane' and 'liberate prisoners' missions it's wise not to send the enemy a postcard telling them you're there.

Blasting your way through simply results in the plane you're after taking off (you hear its engines as it makes a getaway) or the prisoners being moved out to a different spot. So here, the trenches and the knife come in handy. Crawl along inside the trenches and the gooks won't see you, and if they do the knife disposes of them soundlessly.

Similarly, in the 'capture an enemy officer' mission, the bloke will do his duty and try to make a break for it whilst you're busy blasting his mates. But it's not all subtlety. Some missions involve as much blasting as possible and your grenades and missiles will come in handy here for mass destruction. By the way, if you let fly with a missile whilst crouching in a trench, you blow yourself up — and serves you right.

If and when you accomplish a mission, you can summon up your reconnaissance plane to come and get you out. Having done that, you must make your way to the pickup



The plane that drops you behind the enemy lines

point. Even if you're captured, there's still hope because one of your buddies might get to rescue you in the POW mission.



I enjoyed *Airborne Ranger*. Microprose have obviously worked hard on it, both in programming and presentation — so they should, for the price. The handbook is of the usual high standard and there's a keyboard overlay for easy reference to the various key controls.

My only complaint is that the terrain graphics could have been better and more varied. The enemy installations look pretty much the same on all three of the terrains. More variety might have made this a very good game. As it is, it's still very enjoyable and a challenge as tough as you'll get anywhere.

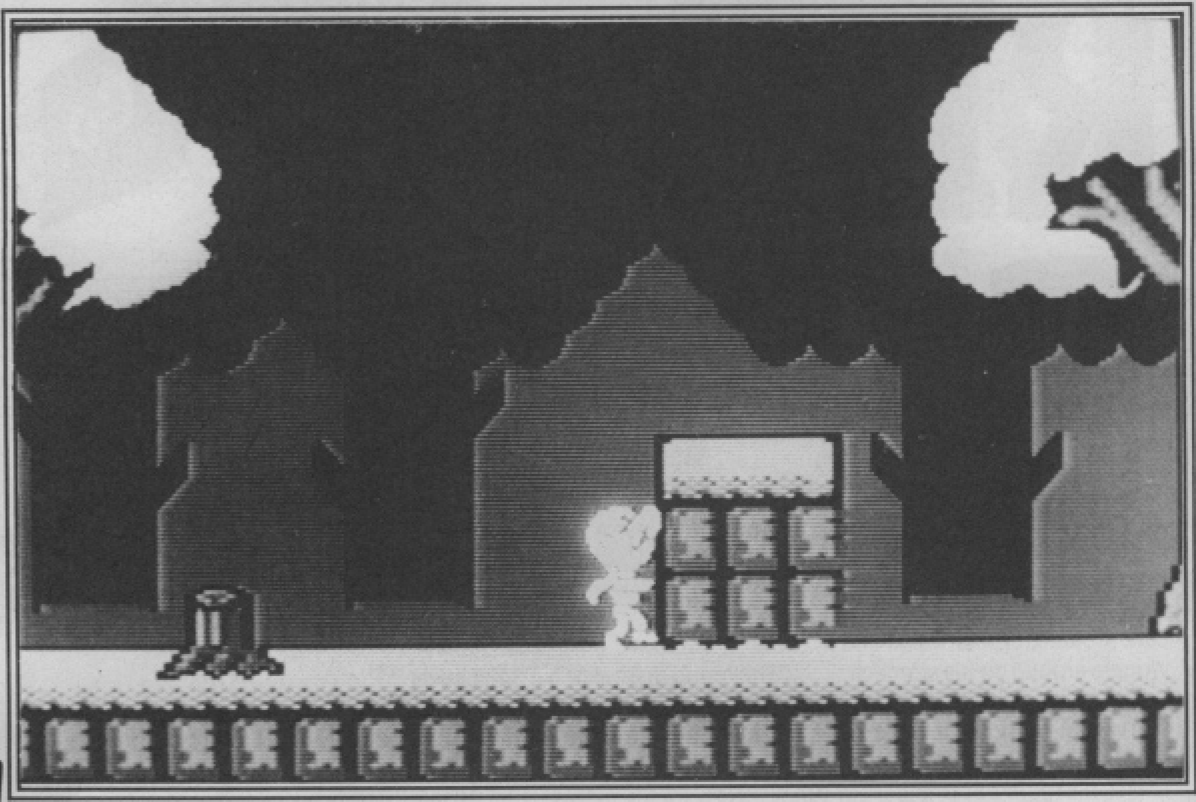
Bohdan Buciak

	Rating (1–10)
Graphics	6
Sound	6
Toughness	8
Endurance	8
Value	8
Overall	**8**

RANGERS

64/128
Imagine
Price:
£14.95/disk
£9.95/
cassette

Nice artwork, nice game, excellent label — things could hardly have looked more promising for Athena at first glance. 'Great!' thought I. 'At last I can do a really banal, enthusiastic review for CU — you know, the kind that would get you Christmas cards from software houses. Think again



▲ **Athena "The blood of a ZX81 runs through her sprite".**

Athena

. . . Athena is simply one of the worst games I've seen since Macsen popped its clogs (remember *Treasure Hunt*?) And having sat at it for two hours I can't help feeling that if new writers are still producing garbage like this AND getting it published, then 8-bit software is definitely dying or dead already.

The plot tells of a heroine, Athena, fighting her way through a strange land towards a showdown with the Dark Overlord. "The blood of a hundred Samurai runs through her veins" we are told — well, that's as may be, but unfortunately the blood of a ZX81 runs through her sprite, for Athena herself is a stupid-looking blur, apparently wearing a baseball cap, who seems to attack her foes with a selection of kitchen utensils! In fairness to Ocean, Athena is based on an arcade game by S.N.K. — easily one of the weakest and least original of the coin-op gaints — but even so you would have thought they could let loose a decent programmer on it.

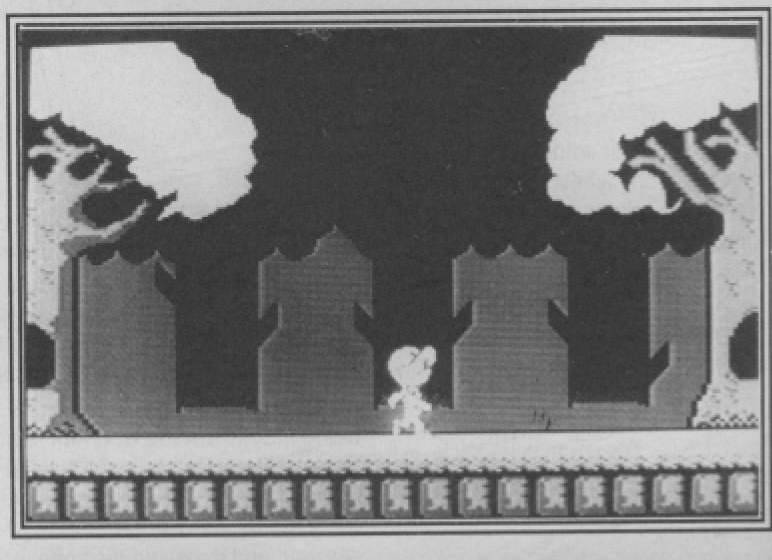
The game scrolls 4-ways, apparently through 6 levels, with Athena having to leap over or destroy the variety of vague sprites which wobble towards her. Some appear to be worms, others are clearly meant to be ogres, all move in from the left or right in predictable patterns a la *Ghosts and Goblins.* Sometimes your path across the screen will be blocked by a wall, but this can be knocked down brick by brick and behind some bricks you will find by way of extra weapons, yes . . . more kitchen utensils. At the top of the screen is a strength indicator for your heroine and one for the particular weapon you are carrying. Obviously, certain weapons are necessary to destroy certain foes and discovering which is which seems to be the main point of the game. Only by defeating some of the more powerful foes can you progress to the next level.

Other details include an uninspiring soundtrack by Martin Galway, no sound effects to speak of and background graphics like you used to draw with a big wax crayon when you were five. Need I say more?

I'm sorry I can't say anything complimentary about this one, because in the past Imagine have released some excellent products.

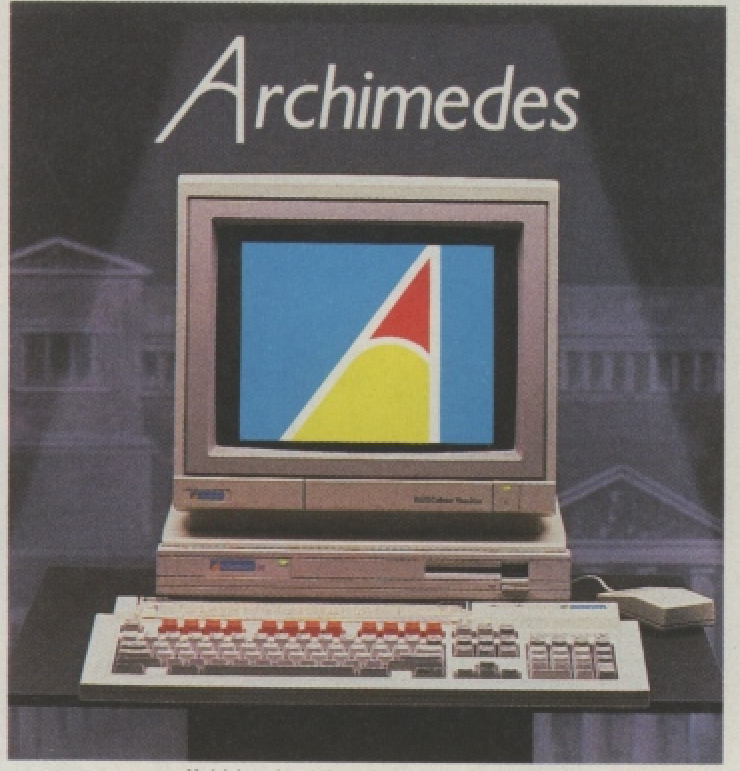
Tina Milan

▼ **Tough talking Tina "can't say anything complimentary about this one".**



Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

4
Overall


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Q

Scruples, an inventive and original computer game, is in the shops today. Do you rush out and sell a personal possession so you can buy it before pay-day?

Q

Scruples computer game is available on Spectrum 48/128, +2, +3, Commodore 64/128, Amstrad CPC 464, 6128 and Atari ST. The computer you own is not one of these. Do you replace it immediately with one that runs Scruples?

Q

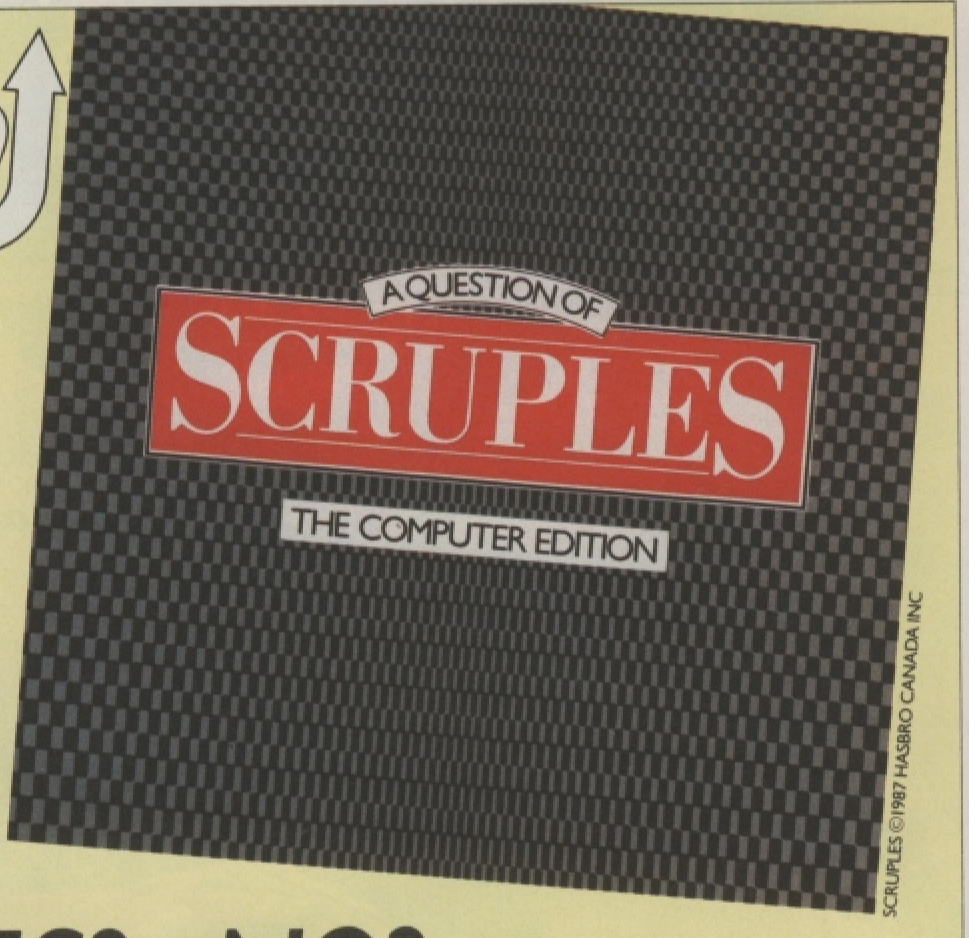
Scruples makes such an excellent Christmas present, you buy one for your computer-mad niece. After one play you are completely hooked – do you keep it?

Q

You are due to keep an important appointment that may affect your future career. Your spouse loads up *Scruples* and you get involved in a game. Do you keep the appointment?

Q

An attractive colleague at work is becoming very attentive and asks you to dinner. You find out that not only do they dislike *Scruples* but they hate computers too. Do you accept their invitation?



YES? NO? ...DEPENDS.

Milton Bradley's compelling game is now available for computer. Anticipate your friend's responses to the provocative questions, in Scruples. Think carefully before answering the moral dilemma you are posed, or turn the tables and give an opposite reply to the one expected! Bluff and counter bluff will be needed, and beware, the other players (the Jury) can challenge your honesty at any time.

The computer interpretation is ingenious and funny. Up to ten people can play: all human, all computer, or any combination. There is a minimum of 64 characters to choose from, each with simulated 'intelligence'. Real players must 'adjust' their personalities and select their appearance from a gallery of faces provided. A minimum of 230 leading questions are built-in and no game will ever be the same.

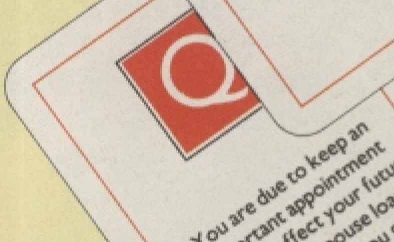
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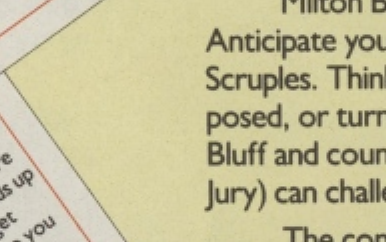
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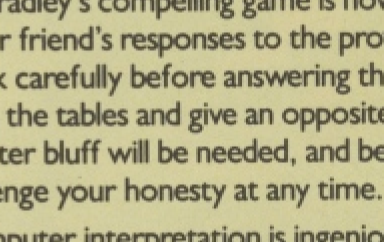
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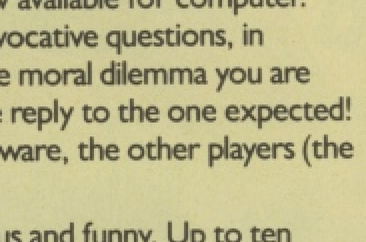
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SPECTRUM SCREEN



AMSTRAD SCREEN


ATARI SCREEN

64/128
PSS
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£9.99/disk

POWER STRUGGLE

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to control all the Communist countries in the world? Or all the countries loyal to Ronnie and the Constitution? You have? Well, *Power Struggle* lets you do just this. You can either be in charge of the Eastern bloc and its allies or NATO. Whichever you feel most comfortable with. You can pit your wits against a computer controlled opponent or fight it out with a mate, both jostling for complete world domination.

The entire game is played on a single screen. With little less than half being taken up by a world map. At the side of the screen are the icons available to you and the enemy, with information and command boxes taking up the remaining half. On the map is a command cursor with which you can have hours of fun by moving it aimlessly around. You can, for comic relief put it over a country of your choice and press fire. A blow up of the country and the surrounding area will appear in the command box along with a small cursor to accurately select the country. The vital statistic of the country will then be shown up in the information box, telling you its world alignment (East or West) military strength, industrial power, political influence and current status. By pressing the fire button twice you gain entry to the table of icons.

The **attack** icon is pretty obvious, it causes all your military resources to start hammering away at a neighbouring country of your choice, until their military strength (or yours) is depleated, then your government can claim the country or they might counter-attack against you.

The next icon on the list is the **supply** icon, which, when selected, transfers 10% of the country's industry to another country. If the government of the supplied country is neutral it will cause a swing in favour to you. Industry also effects the speed at which your armies grow.

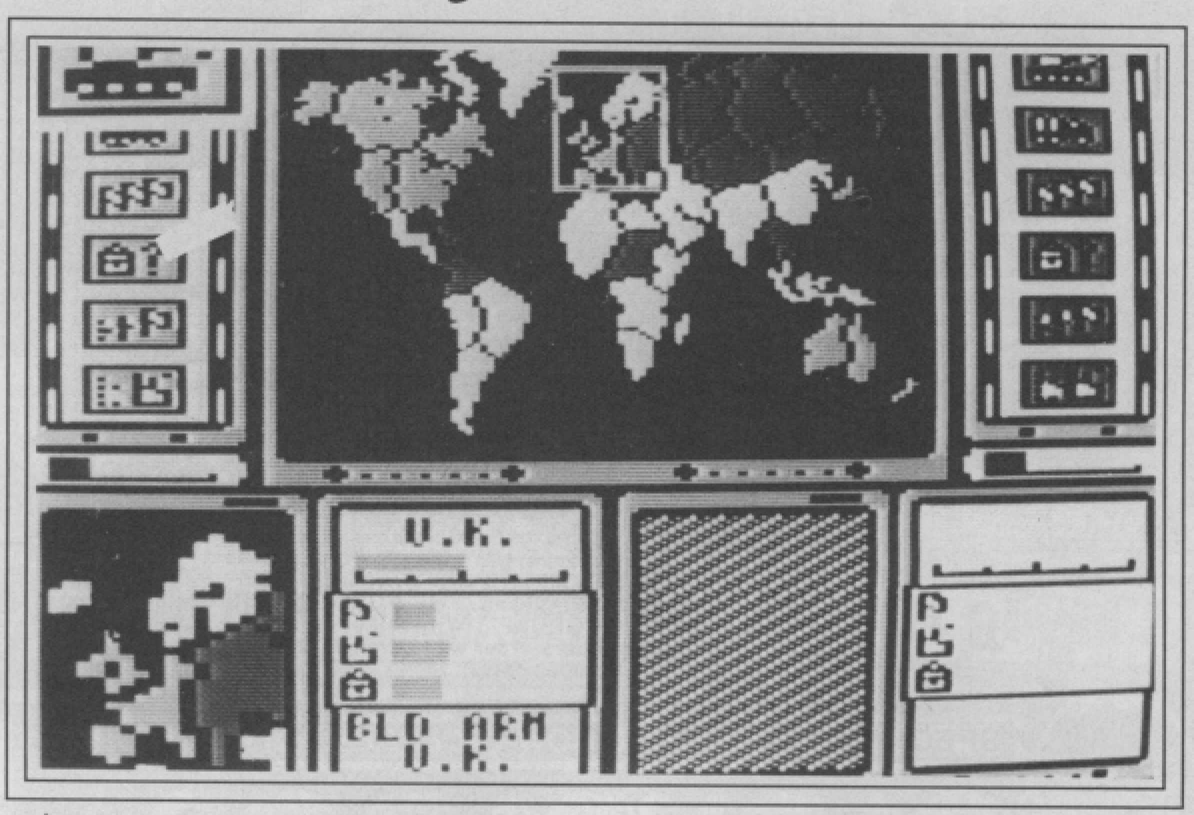
The **Enforce** icon is next, and when selected transfers all your armies to a next door neighbour. This leaves your country defenceless so this option is only wise if you are well protected with a buffer zone of other countries. Then you have **Political** icon that supplies 12.5% of the country's political strength to a neutral country. The purpose of which is to influence the neutral country in to joining your regime. The way that system works is all the political strength supplied is added up and the side with the highest value obtains a swing in favour from the neutral one. The **Build Army** icon transfers 12.5% of industrial strength to the military. And lastly **Build Factories** speaks for itself. Probably the best feature though is where you can have the countries randomly assigned to the East and West.

If you have the upper hand in the game the computer starts to either get desperate and do pointless things, or it just seems to lay down and die. For an old game **Power Struggle** looks good and it plays well too. If you have ever played *Balance of Power* on the ST or the Amiga and enjoyed it, you should like this too.

Although along the same lines as the excellent *BoP* it is in no way the same game. While initially absorbing *Power Struggle* begins to wear thin, as can be expected with this sort of limited option game. Not so much a war game more a form of strategy, rather than a game that requires real tactics and thing-a-head planning skill.

But quids in and five of them in all, *Power Struggle* totals up to a cheap relief from standard games. The sort of thing you could break out at wet weekends when you feel like nothing better to do. But without splitting hairs you either like it or don't, I did. Ideal for power hungry Communist meglomaniacs or plain strategy freaks.

Mark Patterson



East meets West in Power Struggle

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

6
Overall

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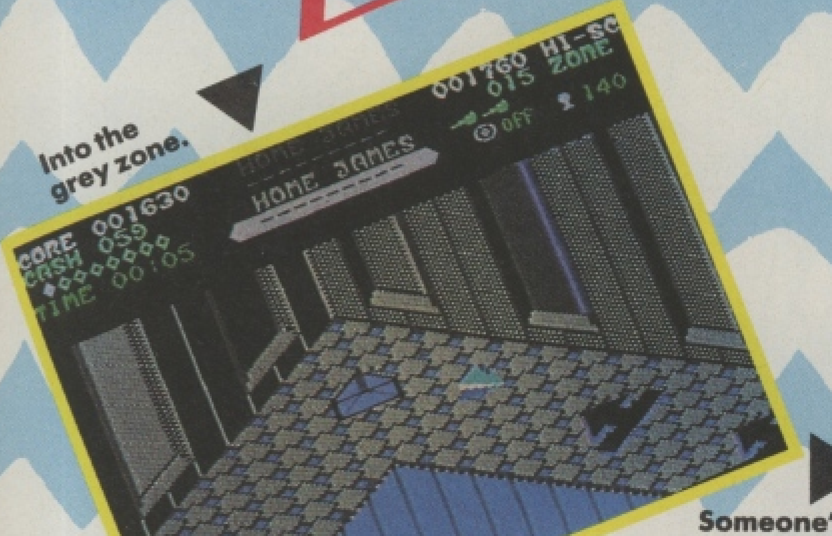
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Zig Zag

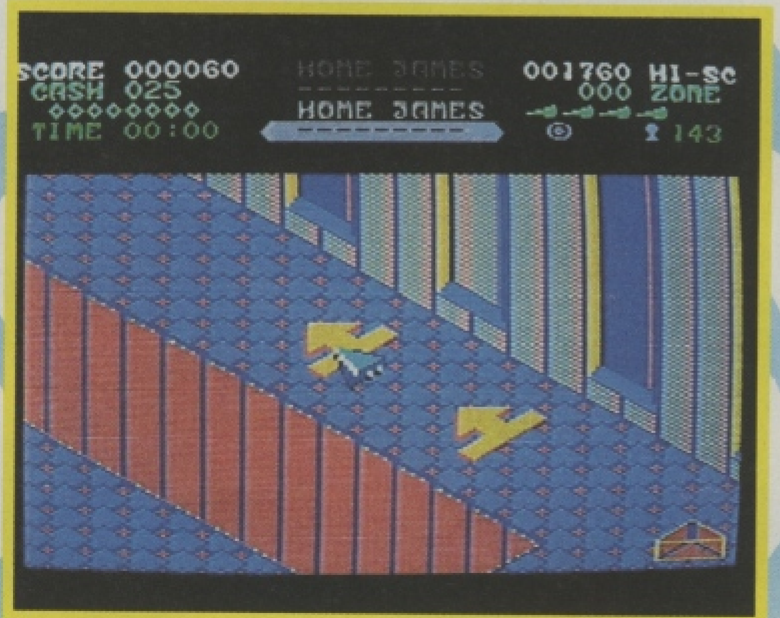


TC comes up with the goods.



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Someone's about to switch the lights off.

To describe a game as 'the latest blockbuster from Tony Crowther' is hardly a recommendation, as owners of *Challenge of the Gobots* and *William Wobbler* will testify. Our Tony has been responsible for more than his fair share of turkeys over the years, but he's also got the ability to occasionally deliver the goods and take everybody by surprise.

Zig Zag is, without qualification, the goods. Tony has teamed up with David Bishop to produce one of the most sophisticated hunt 'n' kill maze games that you're ever likely to see on the 64, with smooth action, flawless animation, solid 3D scenery and a nice line in clanky metallic sound effects.

The game has no plot at all — not unless you'd describe flying down corridors blasting away at everything which moves as a plot. The action take place entirely within a huge city of hi-rise blocks and intersecting streets, picked out in perspective 3D and pastel shades which change to signify the different city zones. The streets widen and narrow, go up and down ramps, and as you fly down them the intervening buildings disappear, allowing you to see where you're going.

Down these mean streets come hurtling crowds of aircraft, rockets, torpedoes and bug-eyed hoppers and generally they don't look too friendly. So kill them.

Hidden somewhere amongst the 32 zones and 1380 screens of the city are the Eight Crystals of Zog, and it won't surprise you to learn that you've got to find all eight before you can once again sleep easy at nights. If you're one of the first five to finish the game, Mirrorsoft will give you a ghetto-blaster autographed by young Tone himself. Despite that, the game is still worth playing.

What makes *Zig Zag* different from all the other shoot-the-aliens-pick-up-the-crystals games, besides the polish of its presentation, is the ingenious way in which you travel round the maze.

Your dinky little delta-wing can only fly up and down, and sidestep to left and right. It can't turn corners. Which is a bit of a problem in a city composed entirely of streets at right angles. But there are prisms at ground level at some junctions, and if you hit these at the correct angle of incidence they'll send you zooming off at 90° until you hit the next prism, if there is one.

If you're flying too high or off-target, you miss the prisms altogether, and you keep travelling in a straight line until either you bounce off a wall or you get blown to bits by the enemy.

The whole thing sounds a bit like a physics lesson, and takes some getting used too. For the first 30 minutes or so you'll loathe it. Hopefully, though, things will suddenly click, and instead of rocketing all over the place like the Dow Jones Index, you can get on with the serious business of exploring and killing.

Actually, killing is in this instance not totally gratuitous. The more beasts and craft you destroy, the better your credit rating is at the bank, so that after a spree of destruction you can take time off and go shopping. Scattered throughout the city are shopping precincts where, provided you've got sufficient spondulicks, you can buy extra weaponry, extra lives, shields, maps, infra-red vision for the unlit zones, and x-ray vision which temporarily removes all buildings.

Most useful of all are the 'raisers' which levitate all nasties off the ground, allowing you to ricochet around the streets without being molested.

There's enough here to keep most gamesters happy for yonks, but Crowther and Bishop haven't stopped there. As well as the usual toggle options for music and sound effects, there is also a reverse joystick mode, enabling your stick to operate like an aircraft joystick (push forward to descend), and a Brain Teaser mode. In this all the hunting and zapping goes on as before but in addition you've also got to solve horrible logic problems, involving the use of flashing targets which open and close streets, and remove and replace prisms. And then there are the time locks . . .

One of the most inventive varients on a well-worn theme, *Zig Zag* is like a breath of fresh air.

Bill Scolding

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8 Overall


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TETRIS

I looked *Tetris* up in the dictionary and there's no such word. Sounds authentic though doesn't it? (Derived from something to do with four-sided shapes no doubt). Could be a goldfish or even a disease that makes your hair fall out. In fact it's none of those things, but, as you probably guessed, a game. I can honestly say it is really weird and I haven't seen anything like it for a long time if ever.

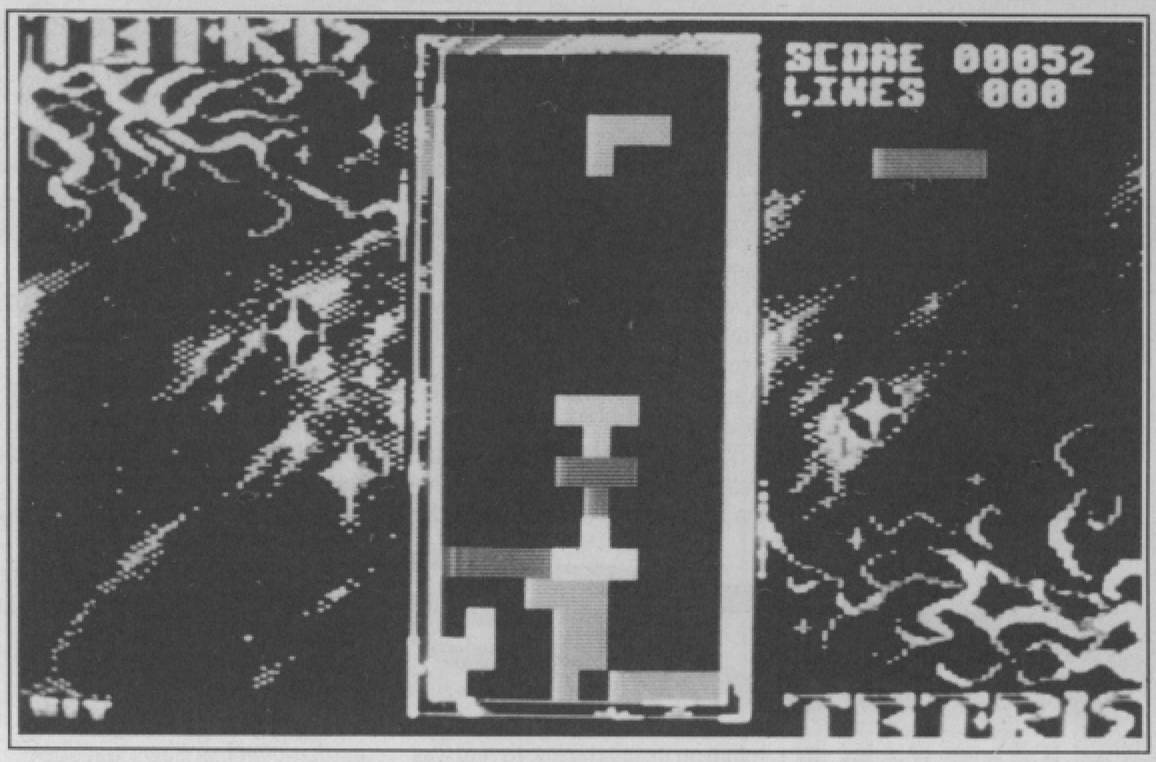
Don't be put off by this, but the nearest thing to this that comes to mind is the kind of thing you used to get in the program listings at the back of C.U. I'm not saying it's bad, I quite liked it, it's just that it's based on an amazingly simple idea and it looks, in the words of the programmer, "nothing mega".

So, what's it all about? Shapes that's what. Square shapes, rectangles, T shapes, L shapes and shapes that look like two staggered bricks, if you get my drift. These shapes are all different colours, but as far as the game is concerned that's largely irrelevant. What is relevant is that there's this rectangler window in the middle of the screen.

The shapes fall, one at a time from the top of the window to the bottom. Sometimes when the shapes fall they slot into each other ("tesselate" is the word for it I think – ask your maths teacher) but most times they don't. You can, of course increase the chances fo this happening by moving the shapes to the left or right and by rotating them with a quick press of the fire button. Regrettably (as this would make life a lot easier) the shapes can not be flipped.

If you can get the shapes to fit so snugly that they form a complete horizontal line from one side to the other, the line disappears and everything above it moves down. The object is to make the game last as long as possible, if not forever, by making all the shapes fit together, getting lots of lines and lots of points.

That's really all there is to it. This game was obviously written by someone with a real obsession for geometry. The game gets more and more difficult as time goes on and the bricks pile up. As the floor reaches the ceiling, so to speak, you have less time to think about where you're going to dump the things. There are a few things to help you out here. One is the panic button which freezes everything by pushing the joystick up. A bit annoying that you have to hit the space bar to unfreeze. The other thing to look out for is the 'what's coming next' indicator which tells you what's coming next. Handy.



It sounds simple and it is. It could have been written in Basic and probably was. One thing's certain, it's a lot better than it sounds. The music, which lasts for a full 25 mins is pretty good and I'd guess that more work went into the loading screen than the game itself.

Two criticisms, one fairly minor, the other one pretty serious news. The blocks scroll down a character space at a time which is pretty rough and amateurish looking, why no pixel scroll? The heavy duty moan is that this is very entertaining for fifteen minutes, but when you've seen all there is to see there's, er, nothing left to see. Or to put it another way, the fun, if that's the word for it, is very short lived.

Ken McMahon

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

5 Overall

64/128
Bulldog Software
Price:£1.99/ cass

SPORE

Eurgh! Nasty scenario this: infected laboratory, genetically altered killer spores, pesticides.

Despite risk of terminal infection, *Spore* is a pretty good game. It resembles those Gauntlet-type games in which generators pump out hordes of nasties that swarm around. In this case, the nasties are mutant spores.

The scene is the inside of an infected laboratory. This is divided up into sections by flashing yellow barriers. Barriers are laser beams that travel between two pale squares. Some of the beams are deflected at rightangles by mirrors. Spore generators are all over the place, confined by the yellow beams.

Your job is to zap the spores and their generators, what else? To do that you have to break the beams to get through. This is done either by a combination of zapping the square at either end, which turns the energy off, or by zapping the mirror that deflects the beam so that it travels a different way.

As soon as you open up a section, the spores start swarming. So you get ready for some manic blasting to get rid of them. The best way is to zap the beam, make a quick retreat and then blast them as they come at you. Being pretty dumb spores, they all travel in a straight line so it's easy to get rid of them quickly if you're in the right position. Between waves of spores, you blast the generators.

Any spores that hit you will drain a little energy, which is displayed at the bottom of the screen. Run out of energy and you're terminally contaminated – and your friends will no longer want to know you.

Also on each level there are the usual items to pick up. The antidote for the spores is in barrels dotted around the lab. Each barrel picked up earns you 100 more points. There's also the occasional flask which gives you more energy.

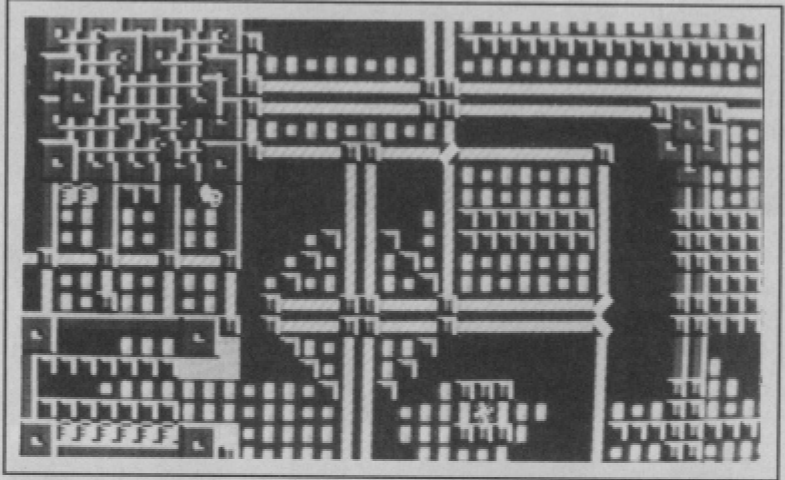
The only disappointing thing about *Spore* are the graphics. The scene looks nothing like the inside of a lab. What you get is a mass of squares, the spores being the ones that flash. And it's the same for each level.

If you manage to complete all the levels in Spore, the programmers have included a function that lets you design your own levels.

With its DIY level designer, *Spore* has got to be good value. This type of game may be a little dated now but they still can't be beaten for sheer manic blasting. Now where did I put that Dettol?

Bohdan Buciak

Bacteriological blasting.



Graphics
Sound
Toughness
Endurance
Value

7 Overall

64/128
Atlantis
Price:£1.99/ cass

SURVIVORS

There has been a nuclear mishap, there are now thousands of people trapped in an underground hibernation dome. You are in control of three droids whose task it is to transport these lost souls to safety. Each droid has its own special ability. You use them one at a time, toggling control between the three by simply pressing the firebutton.

Droid One is the tunneller who digs through earth, whilst Droid Two teleports the survivors to safety. Droid Three pushes boulders, but only one at a time. Now for the nasties, there are a few 'guardian' droids knocking around who will take a life if they bump into you. Apart from them, there's only the boulders to contend with.

The tunneller Droid is particularly susceptible to boulders. If it tunnels away at a chunk of earth beneath a boulder, the offending item is likely to fall on its head. This, to me, was more fun than transporting boring old survivors. With great skill, you can get your tunneler droid completely surrounded by boulders, leaving it totally useless.

The game has seven levels, each one having both a time limit and a specific amount of survivors to rescue. So in level one, you get 3,000 seconds (just under an hour, yawn) to rescue 135 people. Level two? Well, I couldn't manage to stay awake for it.

There are elements of strategy in *Survivors*. It's best to try to keep the three droids together as opposed to just going careering off with one, since the skills of the other two will come in useful at various stages.

So it doesn't sound too bad so far? But I haven't mentioned the graphics yet. These are of the 'block' variety – you know, the stuff that looks as though it was programmed in Basic. Scrolling is equally bad. It's not really a scroll but a judder.

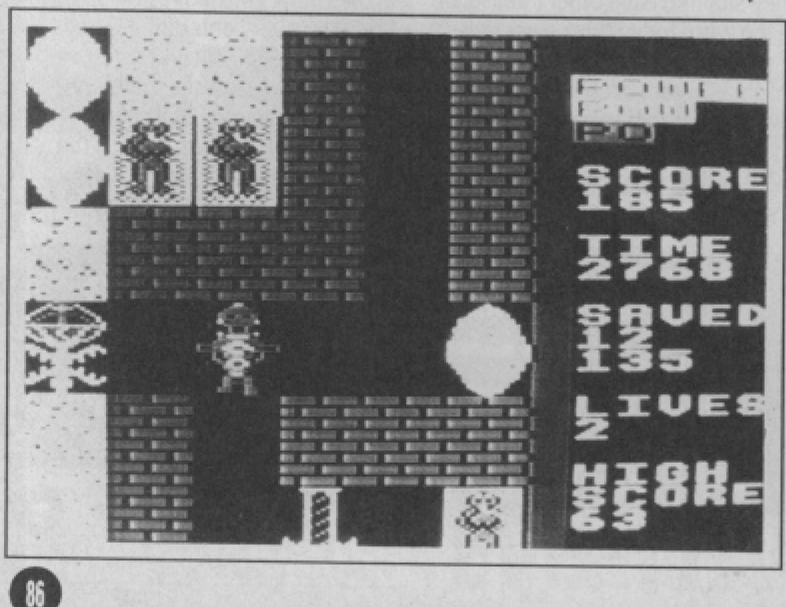
Admittedly the three droids are graphically more acceptable. At least they have moving parts. The earth mover has claws that open and shut and the boulder pusher stamps its feet, waves its arms and nods it head – wacky mover.

And lastly sound. There isn't any, except for a different pitch of beep when you transfer control between droids and a constant ticking sound as the seconds pass.

I can't say I enjoyed *Survivors*. There's really nothing to commend it, owing to its severe lack of anything approaching originality.

Bohdan Buciak

The three droids pose for the picture



Graphics
Sound
Toughness
Endurance
Value

3 Overall

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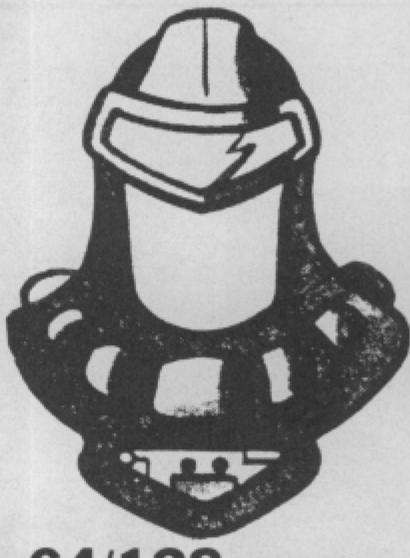
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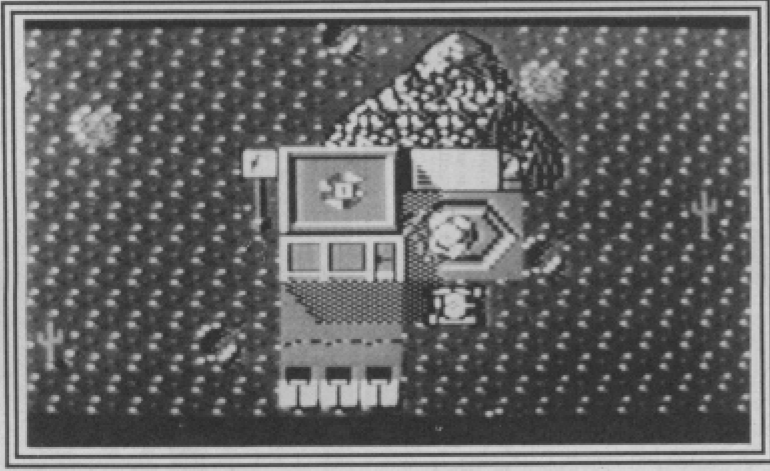
THALAMUS



BY MARTIN WALKER

SOON! CBM 64/128





Boulder Hill — is that a key section or a cactus?



64/128
Gremlin Graphics
Price £9.99 cass/£14.99 disk.

You've read the comic, seen the TV show, worn the pyjamas, slept in the sheets, jogged in the track suit, sat in the bean bag wearing the slippers; now you can play the computer game.

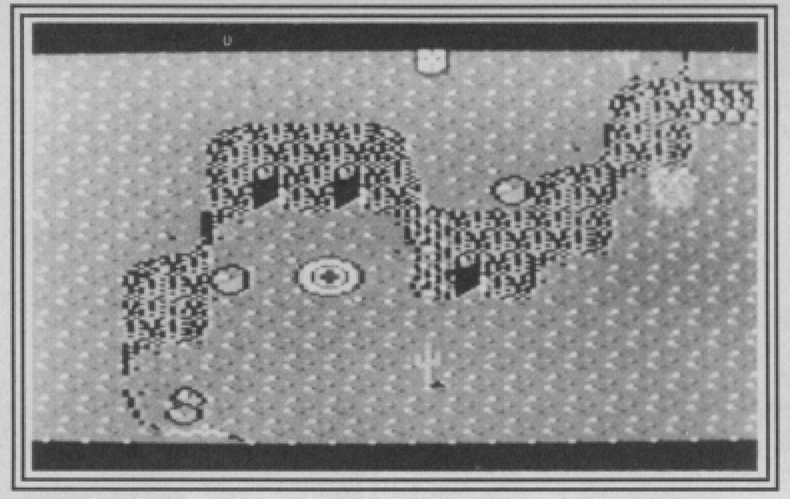
Believe it or not, if you're a big fan of the Mobile Armoured Strike

MASK

Command, you can actually get hold of all that gear and more, everything from MASK toothpaste to MASK dog biscuits. Whether you're an avid MASK collector, or you just tune in to the programme at weekends and read the comic, you'll find that Gremlin's game has more in common with MASK than most of the merchandise knocking around.

As well as the software there's a single page comic which explains the plot pretty well. Matt Trakker is on his way back to Boulder Hill when he is ambushed by Venom. Mayhem drops a bomb which opens up a time vortex and Floyd Malloy throws all the Mask agents into it. The two then hang around waiting for Trakker to show up in Thunderhawk. Molloy attempts to destroy Thunderhawk, but succeeds only in badly damaging it. This, more or less, is where the comic ends and the game begins.

In the role of Matt Trakker, you must travel through the vortex in Thunderhawk and rescue the stranded MASK Agents. There are four locations in time and space and with the exception of the first —



MASK — not just for Matt-maniacs.

Boulder Hill, where you pick up Bruce Sato — there are two agents to be rescued in each. The procedure for this is straightforward, but less than easy. First you must locate the whereabouts of the agent and to do this you must first locate his personal scanner. Obtaining the scanner is not the end of your problems though.

Once picked up, the scanner must be activated, and to do that you will need all four pieces of the security key. Pieces of key can be found all over the place, but only four will assemble to form the letter which, when pressed will unlock the scanner mechanism. Then eight arrows at the bottom of the screen point you in the right direction and you should have no trouble picking up the stranded agent. When you've found him a status sheet pops up telling you who he is. The job's not finished yet though, before you can head for the vortex you must pick up your colleague's MASK, only then can you head for the vortex and the next level.

The playing area is depicted in the familiar aerial fashion and scrolls one of four ways whenever Thunder-Hawk reaches the edge of the screen. Thunderhawk itself is nicely animated with a sort of mementum which makes it continue in motion for a few seconds after you've let go of the joystick.

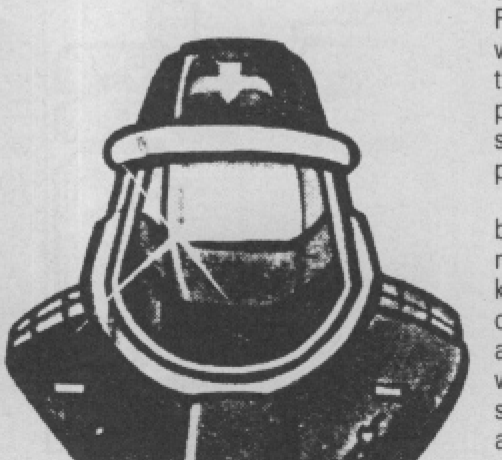
The landscape features provide all sorts of obstacles and dangers which vary, depending on the level. Boulder Hill has, well, boulders, a railway line, very unfriendly jeeps and tanks and Switchblade the super intelligent helicopter bomber. It's a desert landscape which makes the game at first sight look very very much in the *Rambo/Who Dares Wins/Commando genre* (which it isn't). Moving onto pre-historic times you are confronted with palm trees, more boulders (which can be shoved out of the way), volcanoes, dinosaurs, snapping turtles and a pterodactyl in place of Switchblade. Level 3 — far future — features black holes UFOs and the like, and the last level, Venom base, has some real mean stuff like snakes, acid and giant spiders. On the last level you must not only collect the last two agents and their MASKs, but completely destroy the Venom base before returning to the vortex.

What with all this nastiness floating around you'd expect to be able to defend yourself and fight back, and Thunderhawk is well equipped with dual cannons to blast anything minor out of the way. Occassionaly your path will be blocked by immpassable rocky terrain, trees or whatever. This situation can easily be remedied by the use of the bombs which can be found lying in similar containers to MASKS, scanners, keys and so on. The bombs are on a short fuse and have the added advantage taking out any enemy tanks, dinosaurs, or whatever happens to be passing. That includes you, so remember to stand well back after lighting the blue touchpaper.

If you do get badly damaged, whether it's your own fault or not, the damage meter at the bottom of the screen will show you the extent of the bad news. Providing you can find a repair kit lying around it shouldn't turn into a desperate problem. Like everything else though, it's a good idea to make a mental note of where these things are if you pass them by without needing them.

So often licensed games of this sort are just a name, a lot of cash up front to some merchandising outfit and a badly copied picture of the real thing on the cassette inlay. It's nice to see that Gremlin haven't let that attitude get in the way of their ability to consistently produce good games. So, even if you're not a slipper-slinging, watch-wearing MASK fan reserve a space in your stocking for it.

Ken McMahon



Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7 Overall



Chasing the Jihad through the Straits of Hormus.

PHM PEGAS

64/128 Electronic Arts Price: £14.95/disk £9.95/cassette

*P*HM Pegasus is a patrol Hydrofoil Missile craft simulation. The hydrofoil is the Jetship of the age by all accounts. According to the blurb it's "so agile, enemy radar mistakes it for a low flying helicopter, so fast, the enemy has only minutes to react." That, of course, depends very much on who's driving the thing. To begin with, I think the enemy were somewhat surprised to find they had hours to react, but the situation didn't last long.

Pegasus is not the kind of simulation that pops up an enemy for you to shoot and destroy and then obliges with another and another and another until you get bored into trying more exciting things like capsizing your own ship or firing on innocent bystanders. Instead *Pegasus* offers you eight missions based on 'real-life' scenarios, each of which tests your ability to command and control the hydrofoil's weapons and navigation systems.

The first two scenarios are in fact for training purposes and there's not really any point in going for the more ambitious and exciting missions until you've become accomplished at these. Battle training introduces ten enemy ships into your stretch of water and you have to blow them out of it. The ships appear one at a time so you can just about keep calm, think through what you are doing, and become a really efficient weapon of destruction.

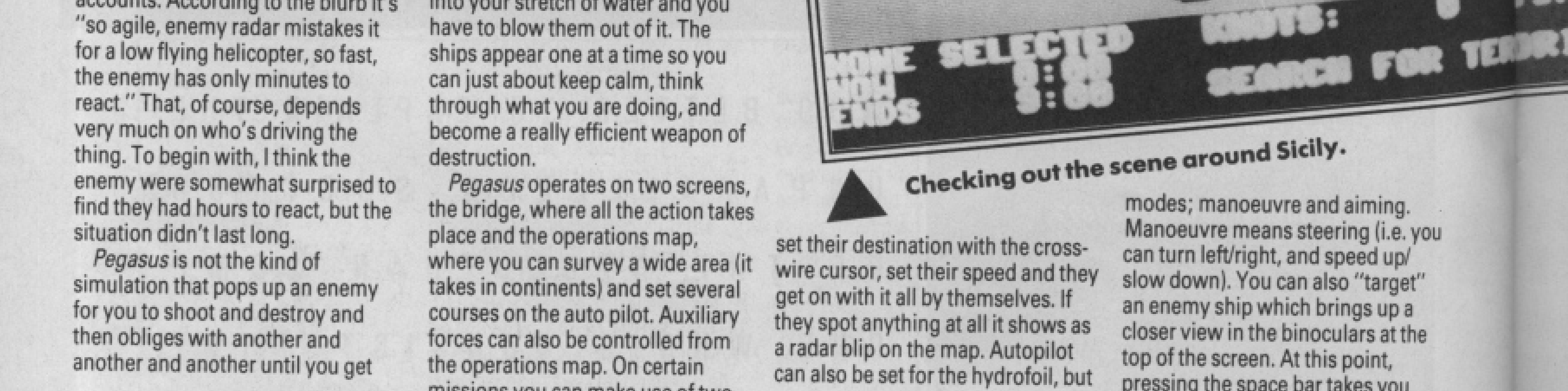
Pegasus operates on two screens, the bridge, where all the action takes place and the operations map, where you can survey a wide area (it takes in continents) and set several courses on the auto pilot. Auxiliary forces can also be controlled from the operations map. On certain missions you can make use of two surveillance helicopters. You simply set their destination with the cross-wire cursor, set their speed and they get on with it all by themselves. If they spot anything at all it shows as a radar blip on the map. Autopilot can also be set for the hydrofoil, but moving to the bridge and taking joystick control overrides the autopilot.

The bridge is where it all happens, of course. The first contact you will have with enemy ships is when they show up on your radar which has a 40 mile range. For action at close quarters the radar range can be reduced in steps down to 2.5 miles. There are a number of things you can do when you spot an enemy ship, all of which either directly or indirectly involve blowing it out of the water. First it might be an idea to discover what it is and how dangerous it is, which you can do with the 'ship spotters' guide in the centre pages of the manual (which incidentally is appalling–half of mine was missing).

There are two ways to blow ships up. The easy way is to let rip with a guided missile and forget all about them. On the bridge there are two modes; manoeuvre and aiming. Manoeuvre means steering (i.e. you can turn left/right, and speed up/slow down). You can also "target" an enemy ship which brings up a closer view in the binoculars at the top of the screen. At this point, pressing the space bar takes you into aim mode, F3 selects the guided



Checking out the scene around Sicily.



missile and I'm sure I don't have to tell you what the fire button does. Guided missiles can take up to about a minute to reach the target depending on its range, but they're pretty reliable.

Smaller patrol boats and ships at close range can be taken out with the 76mm cannon. Same procedure as with the missiles, only this time press F1 for the gun before letting rip. An aim corrector flashes to show where your last shot was wide of the mark so that you can correct accordingly. You have a lot more shells than missiles, so you can really go mad with these.

Of course the enemy doesn't just sit there waiting to be blown up, it (it helps if you try not to think of them as people) fires at you. With shells all you can do is try and dodge, missiles are more fun altogether. A



SUS

▲ Flush those Commie's outa Cuba.





▲ View from the bridge.

'lock' indicator tells you when one is on its way in. The procedure is to wait until it is about a mile away, launch the chaff (a sort of mixture of Bacofoil, old Kit Kat wrappers and empty lager cans which fools the enemy radar and deflects missiles) and belt off at right angles. Nine times out of ten you can get away with it, but if you do get hit, damage indicators like the ones you get on the new Fiat Uno dashboard show you what's out of action.

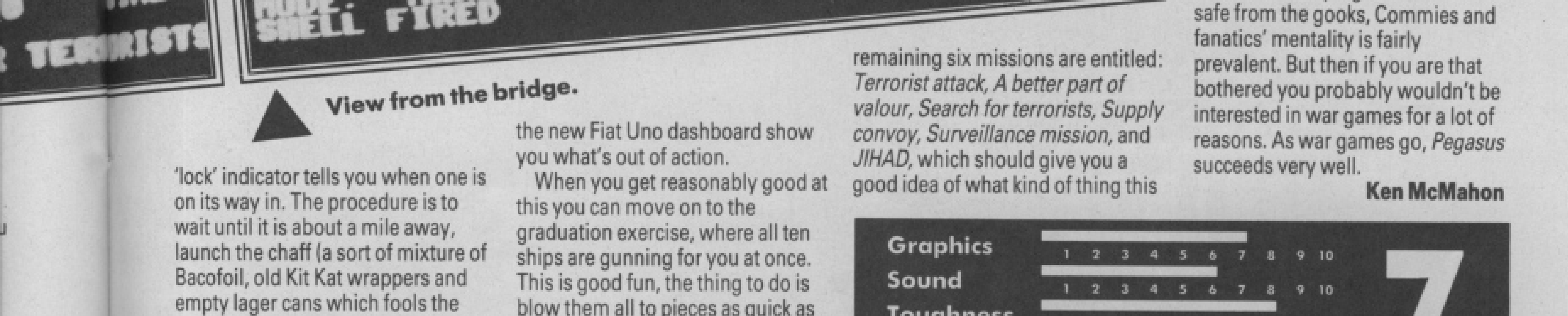
When you get reasonably good at this you can move on to the graduation exercise, where all ten ships are gunning for you at once. This is good fun, the thing to do is blow them all to pieces as quick as you can. Providing you come up to scratch with the training this should really be no problem, then you can move on to the real thing. The remaining six missions are entitled: *Terrorist attack, A better part of valour, Search for terrorists, Supply convoy, Surveillance mission,* and *JIHAD,* which should give you a good idea of what kind of thing this is all about.

For example, *Search for terrorists* involves tracking down and destroying two missile corvettes which have attacked an American missile base off the coast of Sicily. You have a Sparviero hydrofoil (armed with Exocets) and an AB212 helicopter to track them down. In all the missions scoring is based on several factors like completion of the main objective (which is not always complete annihilation–there are reconaissance and escort missions), enemies destroyed and time remaining–there is a limit.

As a simulation *Pegasus* is certainly fascinating to play, it achieves just the right mix of complexity, realism and impressive graphics to keep you hooked. The fact that there is a final objective which must be achieved within the time limit if you are to succeed usually ensures a tension filled finale. The only think I have to say against it is that, inevitably, the old 'Uncle Ron keeping the free world safe from the gooks, Commies and fanatics' mentality is fairly prevalent. But then if you are that bothered you probably wouldn't be interested in war games for a lot of reasons. As war games go, *Pegasus* succeeds very well.

Ken McMahon

	Scale 1–10
Graphics	7
Sound	6
Toughness	8
Endurance	8
Value	8
Overall	7



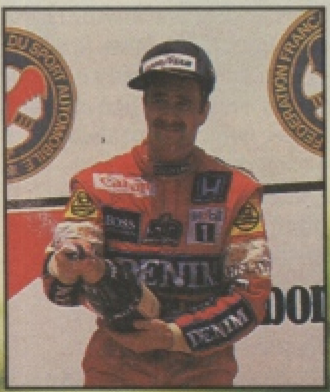
NIGEL MANSELL'S

GRAND PRIX

"NIGEL MANSELL'S GRAND PRIX" is ready to take you and your computer into the fast lane of game excitement. As well as capturing the speed and adrenalin pumping danger of the world's greatest sporting spectacle, the game is the first racing simulation to reflect some of the enormous advances in car design and technology that have taken place recently.

And yet the game still offers an excellent opportunity for even the most inexperienced novice to blast round the track at excessive speeds with the turbo on maximum boost and not a care in the world for fuel consumption, tyre wear or racing line. However, for those who know, or want to know a little more, there is an opportunity to race a selection of the world's greatest circuits in the quest for valuable championship points.

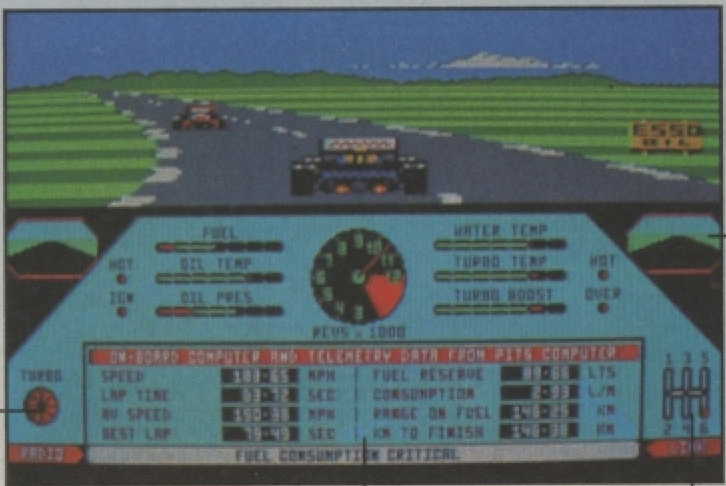
The red lights are on – *you snap into gear.*
The engine roars – *your grip tightens on the steering wheel.*
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Ahead of you lies 31 weeks of the world's most gruelling and spectacular sporting championship.



(Technical Consultants – Nigel Mansell, Peter Windsor, Williams Grand Prix Engineering Ltd.)

Nigel Mansell celebrating victory.

Just over half the race completed and you're lying second to your main rival – 0.8 seconds ahead of you.



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64/128
Firebird
Price: £2.99

Sound as

Two new cheapo music packages from Firebird offer you a music editor and a drum machine for a total of a fiver. Is that too good to be true? Is that all it takes to be the next Pet Shop Boys? Ken McMahon gets up to get on down . . .

The first thing I have to tell you is that judging by his picture on the cassette inlay Ubik is a complete nobhead. Unless you happen to think that looking like Michael J Fox with shoulder length hair, a headband, holes in the knees of your jeans, a denim waistcoat and studded leather wristbands is a really cool way to dress of course.

Anyway, Ubik's style, or rather his lack of it, hasn't really got very much to do with *Ubik's Music*, which is a complex, but cheap synthesiser package. Before I get on to what it actually does I'd like to moan a lot about the instructions. As I said, it's a complex program and you'd expect pretty lengthy 'how to get a note out of this thing' type explanations. Now I appreciate Firebird trying to keep the cost down and all that, but trying to fit a 30 page manual on to the back of a postage stamp just doesn't work. If you buy this make sure you've got a magnifying glass.

From what I could make out the program is an editor which enables you to create and sequence music using the SID chip's three channels. Commands are entered via a text editor which is split into three columns — one for each channel. You can create sequences by entering the notes to be played in order and there are several additional commands that can be used. *Voice*, for example, selects the voice definition to be used for subsequent notes, *Tempo* alters the playback speed. *Slide and Drum* you could probably guess at. So the dedicated composer could build an entire piece assembled from individually created sequences in this manner.

Apart from the editor there is one other major part of the program and that is the live play/edit voices section. The screen here is divided into two sections, the top half being a keyboard the bottom displaying all the voice, waveform, filter and other SID chip paramaters which affect the way notes will sound. The temptation is to do the obvious and have a good old bash on the keyboard, but while this is good fun it's vastly underusing the potential of the program. From this section you can also playback music created in the editor through any one, or all three channels. So you could, for example play your bass line through channel three and accompany it on the keyboard through channels one and two.

All the parameters in the lower half of the screen can be changed to alter the sound while it is playing — this part is quite good for experimentation, but it helps if you know what you're doing.

Ubik's Music has all of the filing operations you would expect to find on a more expensive program. You can load and save music, get a directory if you're using disk and even use the DOS commands from within the program. You can also compile completed compositions for use in Basic or machine code programs.

This really is a very extensive sound/music editor and there's no doubt that at three quid you're getting a lot for your money. All the same I'd advise against buying it if you just want to bash around on the keyboard and have a bit of a laugh creating special effects — pick a synth package that's easier to understand. User Friendly is one thing this isn't. It looks like it may have developed into a commercial program out of something the author wrote for his own use. As such to get the most out of it you will need to have at least a rudimentary knowledge of the workings of the SID chip.

Ubik's Music



Ubik: tinkling the ivory chips.

a Pound

64/128
Firebird
Price: £1.99

When *Microrythm* became the utility to first crash its way in to the charts way back at the beginning of this year. It was hailed as the cheapest drum kit in the history of the universe. £1.99 for a whole bundle of different sampled percussion sounds was certainly not something to be sneered at. Amazingly, Firebird has enhanced the program fourfold, but retained the £1.99 price tag. Now renamed *Microrythm +*, it features not just one set of sampled sounds, but four. Crammed onto both sides of the cassette, you can choose from *micolatin, microdisco, microvocal* an *microtune.*

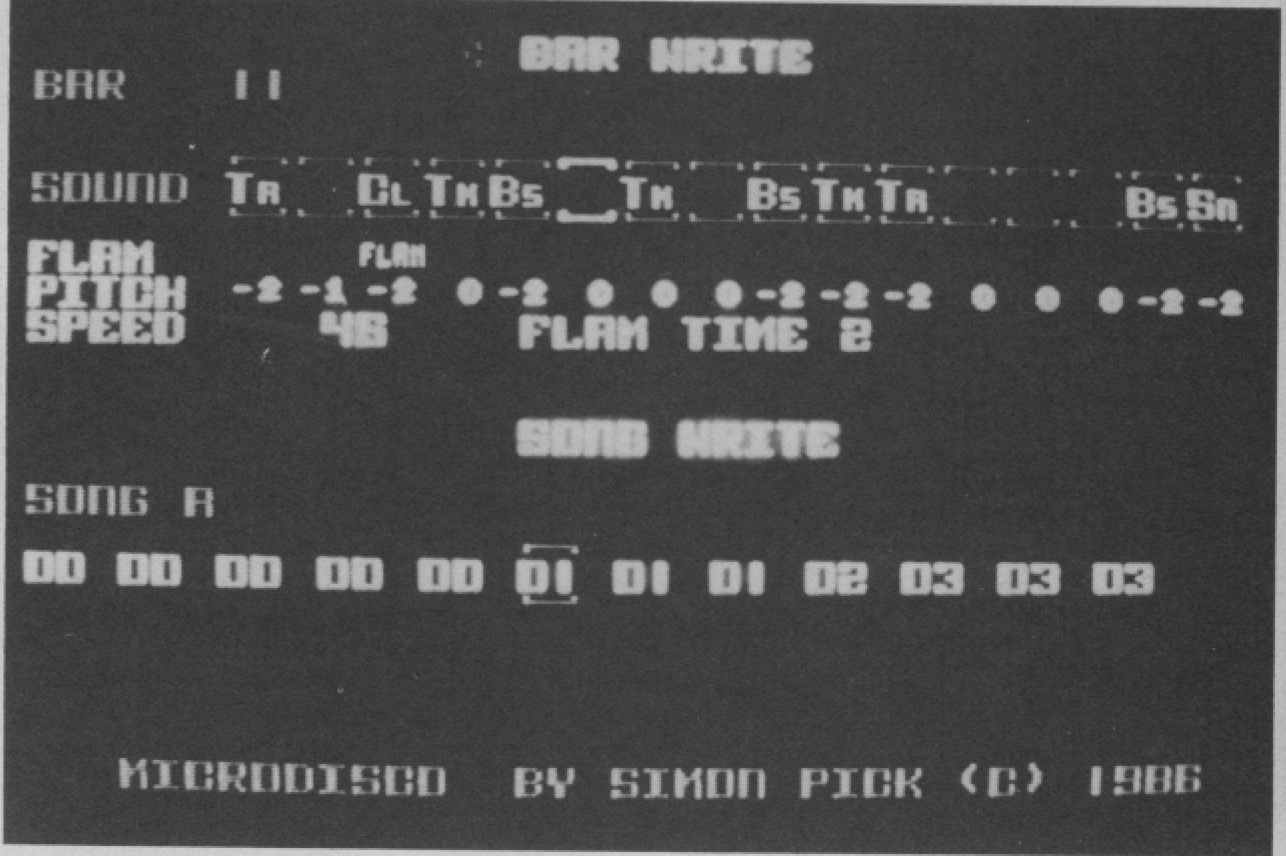
The first two sets are probably the closest thing to the original *Microrythm*'s set of sampled drum sounds and include bass, snare, handclap, crash and all the rest. *Microtune* includes some more melodic sounds in addition to the pure percussion stuff. But for sheer outright wackiness *microvocal* has to be heard to be believed. This section provides you with a selection of sampled voice sounds meddled with to such an extent it's almost hard to tell they ever belonged to a human being in the first place. They're weird, unnatural even. All four sets of sounds load as a separate program and each comes with some sample tunes composed presumably by the program's author, Simon Pick. You can play these tunes in their entirety, steal bars and incorporate them in your own compositions, take what's there and modify it, or start completely from scratch on a brand new beat.

As with its predecessor, *Microrythm+* has three operating modes; song write, bar write and real time mode. The last of these allows you to bash around on the keyboard, trying out each of the sampled sounds available. Because sampled sound consumes vast quantities of memory there are few variations, and depending on which section you have loaded, you will have between 12 and 20 or so different sounds to choose from. By far the most interesting is the *microvocal* set — modified human voice samples. When you get bored messing around with the keyboard you can move on to something more ambitious.

In bar write mode the individual sounds can be put together and you can compose bars of music. Notes of varying pitch can be placed on the bar with spaces between them to denote rests. Once your bar is composed you can play it to see how it sounds and you can in fact place, remove and alter notes on the bar while it's playing (your timing has to be pretty good though). As well as altering the pitch of the notes you can introduce 'flam'. This makes the note double beat with a short delay in between which can be tampered with for some wild effects.

Having composed all of the bars you need you can put them together in song write mode. Each bar is numbered and it's simply a case of typing in the bar numbers in the sequence you want them played. That's all there is to it. It's a simple program to use but a lot of fun. And if you play it through a hi-fi (via the audio video din socket at the back of the 64) it will not only sound ten times better, you can play a hundred times louder, ensuring maximum enjoyment for all the neighbours. If *Microrythm* was a bargain that makes this version an absolute giveaway. Make sure you get a copy.

MICRORYTHM



▲ **Microrhythm: Layin' down a byte.**

C64/128
Price:
£1.99 cass



▲ **Drive that shoebox, sucker!**

GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR

Super Sprint? No. *Super Sprint* clone? Yes! From what I hear, this was based loosely around *BMX Simulator*, though it's nowhere near as good. In this case there are fourteen tracks, each one centred around the idea that driving under bridges is fun. Not very! For the best part you're clueless as to what's happening; whether you're stuck, whether there's an oil slick or some other difficulty.

Each course lasts for three laps or ninety-nine seconds, whichever comes first. *Super Sprint*'s appeal was that you could wrap yourself around the steering wheel as you threw the car around bends. Sadly, most of the world's top software programmers do not realise that a five inch piece of plastic makes a bad steering wheel. So you end up getting cramp in your trigger finger which is using the fire button as an accelerator pedal, while the rest of the hand is bending the stick at alarming angles trying to rotate the car onto a half decent heading.

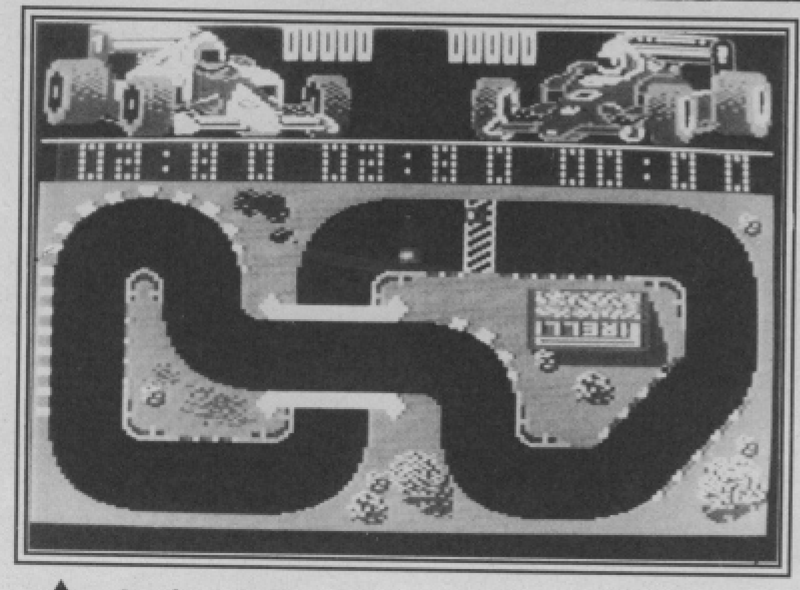
Speaking of cars, the one in *Grand Prix Simulator* looks more like a soap dish. In layman's terms, a block. Interesting huh? The tracks aren't exactly pretty to look at either, samey and bland. The only variation comes with the different track positions. What is pretty, though, are two neat cars which take up the top third of the screen, doing nothing other than looking, well, pretty.

If not a contender for biggest rip off of the year, *Grand Prix Simulator* has to take the title of most frustrating beat your head against an iron anvil award. The inertia effect is put to good use, but stragegically placed gaps in the crash barriers mean that as you come out of a death defying spin, you crash through the hole and into a stand of spectators. Here's the tricky bit: with no room to manoeuvre or accelerate and no way of going into reverse, how do you do a U-turn to get out again? A weeny bit tricky eh? The computer car doesn't seem to fare much better either. Sadly though, it still suffers from the syndrome that first appeared in *BMX Sim,* where you could easily say to yourself "I don't have to worry about being behind at this stage, the computer car crashes at the third bend and takes three seconds to get going again."

The sound is different, a strange technoramic noise blares, somewhere between an engine noise and a tune. The brake noises sound like a pig who has just discovered that it's destined to end its days on Bernard Matthew's plate. Supporting the sound FX is an equally tacky display of digitised speech, the person whose voice was digitised would have no problem on an advert for Tunes or announcing the cancellations of trains. Both jobs require an inability to grasp the fundamentals of speaking through the mouth.

GPS is officially endorsed by Formula Three race driver Johnny Dumfries, who cannot possibly be doing his career much good by putting his name down for a game such as this.

At first sight worthy, but it's not until you have tried persevering with it for more than an hour and realising there is no way you're at fault with the game, that it becomes clear that it's the game itself which is so hideously frustrating. This is the sort of game I would only recommend to Yuppies who have lost their driving licenses and don't mind forking out for more than a day's entertainment, or who just can't wait for a regular fix of the genuine version of *Super Sprint.*



▲ **Looks a bit familiar — doesn't play familiarly though.**

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3
Overall

Mark Patterson

A DOZEN GOOD REASONS W

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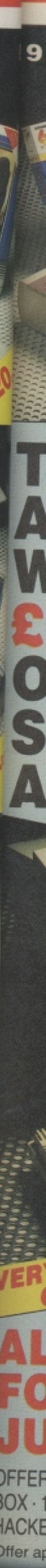

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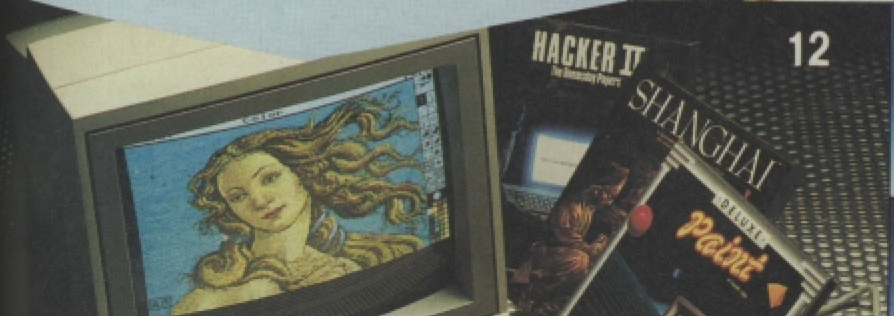
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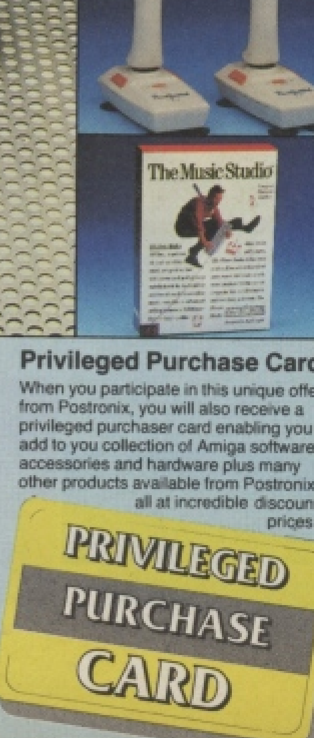
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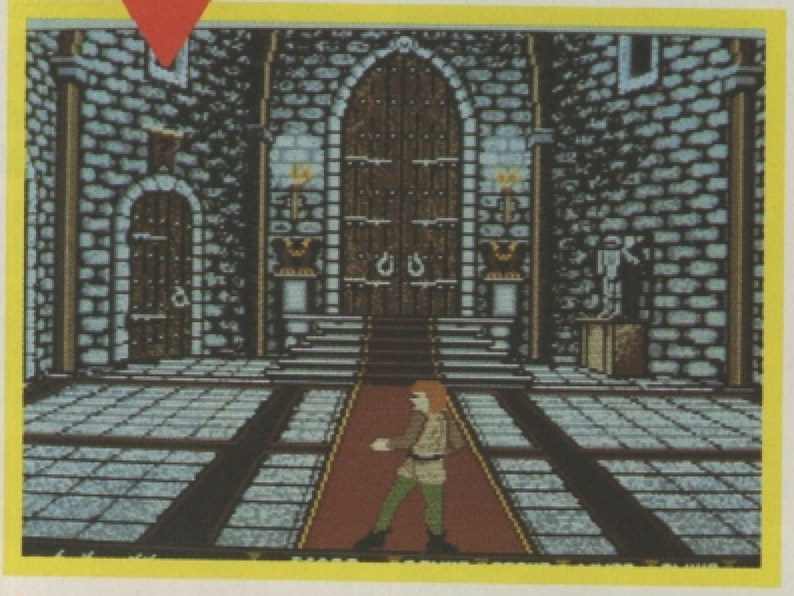


DARK CASTLE

Amiga
Mirrorsoft
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C.U. Screen Star



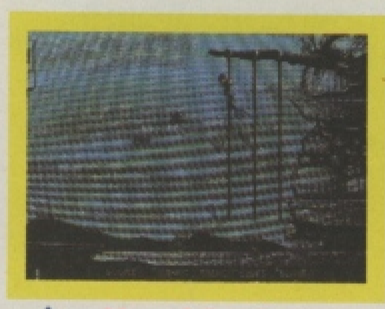


Choose a door to start the game.

Let me take you on a mystic journey to a house on a hill in a far away land. Not just any sort of house, but a haunted house, with fourteen rooms each one more terrible than the previous, populated by demonic monkeys, flying dragons, rats, bats and kinky guards who are into leather and whips. And at the end? The Black Knight — to overthrow him is your task.

All you have for your protection is a handful of rocks (well hardly a handful, more like sixty!) to fend off anything that flies, crawls or slithers into your way. If a lack of rocks you should suffer, you could always collect a bottle of elixir to ward off rats and the bats. Later on in the game such objects as weapons, fireballs, maces and magic shields can be found. The rooms suffer no lack of variety. There are dungeons, belfrys, towers, halls and a lot more I can't yet reach.

The game is along the same lines as *Dragon's Lair*, but about ten times better. The graphics while not amazing have some fantastic effects, some very comical ones at that. In the dungeons for example



Hunchback-rope room.

you have one of the guards whipping the life out of three unfortunates. Every time the whip reaches its maximum extension you get the familiar digitised crack and a little flash-like star right at the end of the whip. If you should just happen to run the little hero off the edge of a platform, in best cartoon tradition, he'll give you a doleful look, his head spins and he looks towards the floor, shrugs his shoulders and plummets to the flagstones below. If you're lucky he'll get up again, groan, shake his head a lot, and makes that bluberblurberbluber noise which can only be made by shaking your head from side to side very fast while wobbling your jowels!

Some of the critters are really lovely. The ravens for example, when hit with a stone plummet beak-first toward the ground, and land with a digitised splat and a mish-mash of feathers and bits of flesh. Probably the cutest animals in the game have these gigantic hands and strut around making (digitised) meep meep noises. In fact most of the noises in the game are digitised, and good quality at that. Some times the various noises generated by the rats can get on your nerves and can only be cured by a rock in the foul creature's gob. One of the nicest special effects in the game has got to be when you clobber an upside down hanging bat, it gives a little squeal then drops straight down and lands with a dull thud on the ground.

Whilst this is by no means the best game ever released on the Amiga, it is one of the funniest. It's a laugh to play which is more than I can say for most of the games that I've loaded up lately.

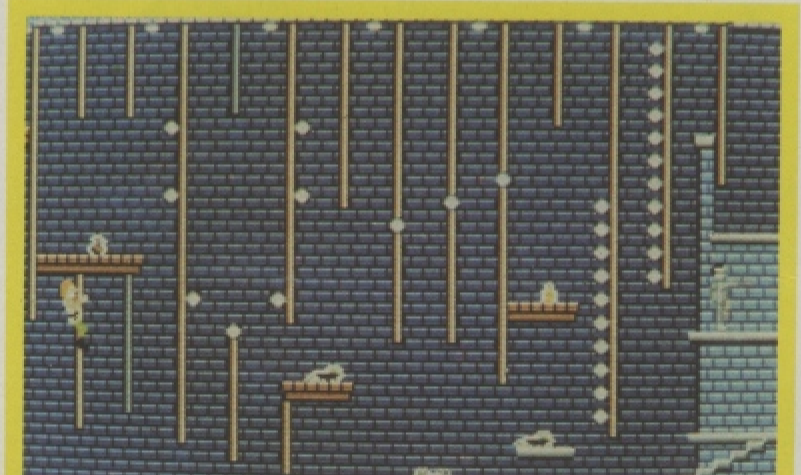
My major gripe though is that it uses the disgusting two disk system, which is fine if you have a second drive, but for poor mortals like me it means a lot of fiddling around with the disks when I would much rather be playing the game. Nevertheless, it is a well crucial game from Mirrorsoft who prove once more that they're supreme on the Amiga.

This is truly an excellent piece of software, impeccable in every detail. My money's on it to be a winner.

Mark Patterson

AMIGA

Outside the castle beset by bats.





C.U. Screen Star

Rating	Score (1–10)
Graphics	
Sound	
Toughness	
Endurance	
Value	N/A

8 Overall

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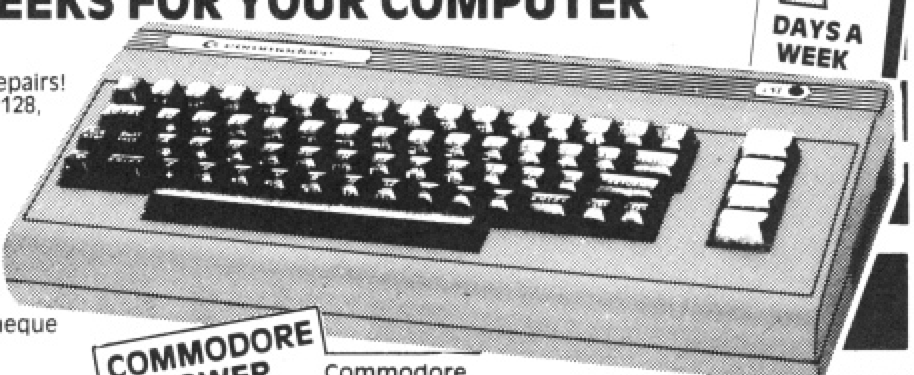
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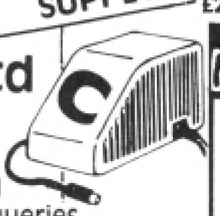
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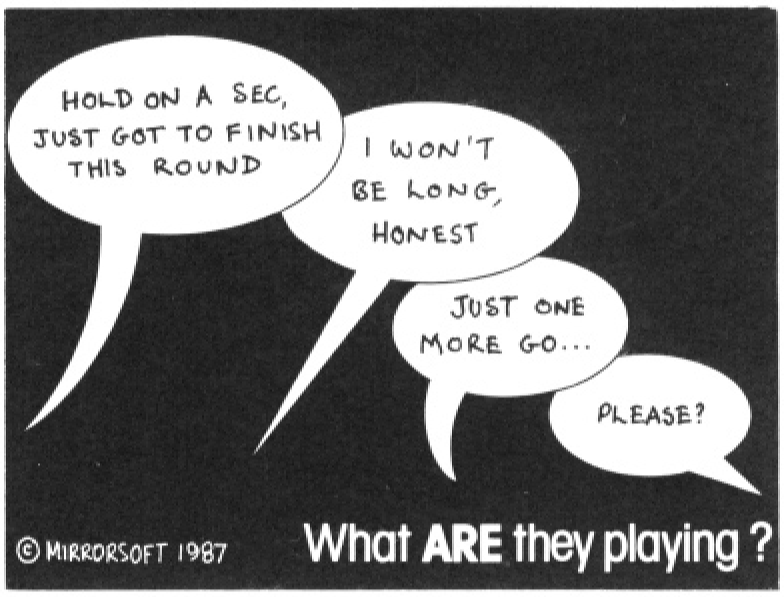
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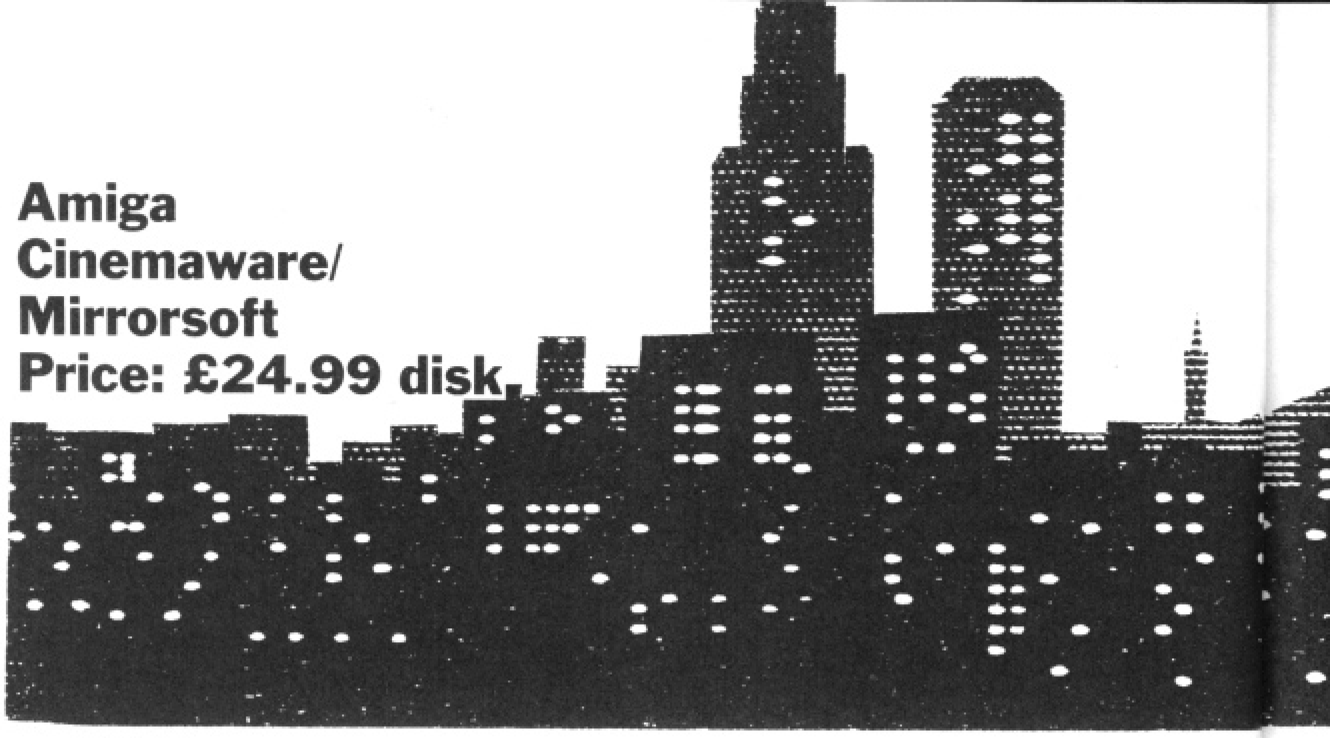
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THE KING OF CH

You gotta do it right or wind up dead" one of *King of Chicago's* between scene messages reminds you, and that ain't easy in this game, buddy.

KOC is an example of what publicity folk have taken to referring to as "interactive movies". Basically what this seems to mean is that the game plays itself, and you're able to "interact" with it, making decisions for the main character and thereby changing the storyline and influencing whether or not there's going to be a happy ending.

Sounds a bit dull, eh? But when you actually sit down to *King of Chicago*, for some stupid reason you'll find you just can't get up until you've reached the end, or rather, an end.

According to the promo material there are over *one billion* different ways to play *King of Chicago*, and, though I can't say I've personally tried 'em all, I'm prepared to take their word for it. This is a massive game — so massive, in fact, that you need to use not one but two Amiga drives to play it comfortably. Every time I sat down to play I was faced with new scenarios and new decisions to make.

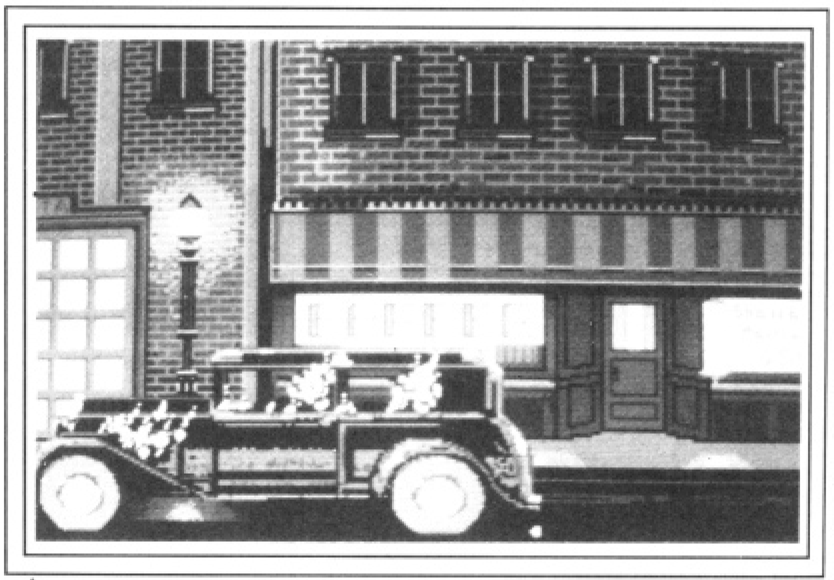
The main character, played by you, is an ambitious young hood by name of Pinky Callahan. You're from the Windy City's less powerful Northside, for years overshadowed by the Southside mobsters led by the infamous Al "Scarface" Capone. But now Big Al's been taken off the scene (for tax fraud) and suddenly Chicago's up for grabs. You want to be the next King of Chicago: so how you gonna get what you want?

Well, you're going to have to be ruthless, tough and real cunnning. You've got to know who to trust, who to rub out, who to lean on and who to be respectful to. One of *KOC's* most intriguing features is the way in which it forces you to make snap decisions based on your assessment of another person's character — and if you blurt out the wrong thing you could wind up friendless, which, in Chicago is a short step from a quick dip in a pair of concrete slippers.

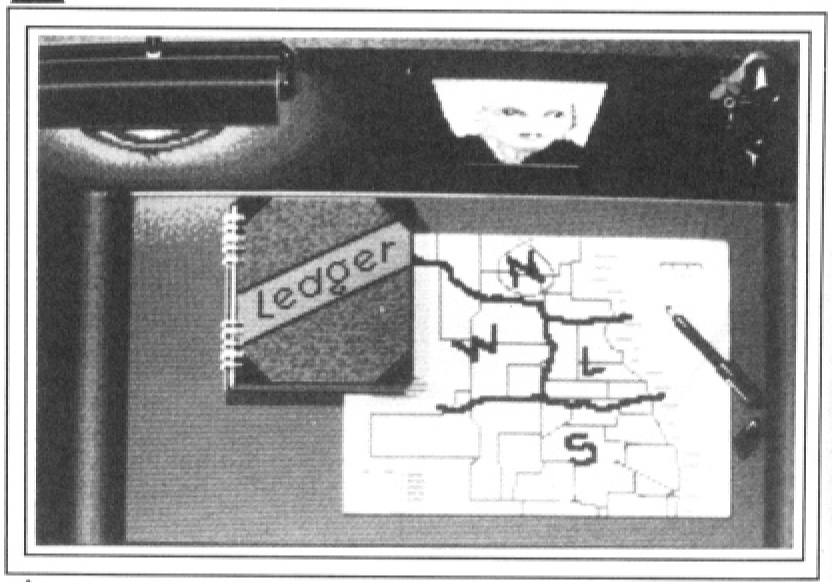


You make your choices by guiding your cursor — a fly (on the wall?) — to whichever of Pinky's impulses you think he should follow. These "impulse" bubbles (usually in twos or threes) crop up fairly regularly — and if you don't decide swiftly which one Pinky should go for the computer will make the decision instead. The decisions you're faced with range from whether you should buy your moll, Lola, a new car, to whether you should plug someone straight away or wait a while.

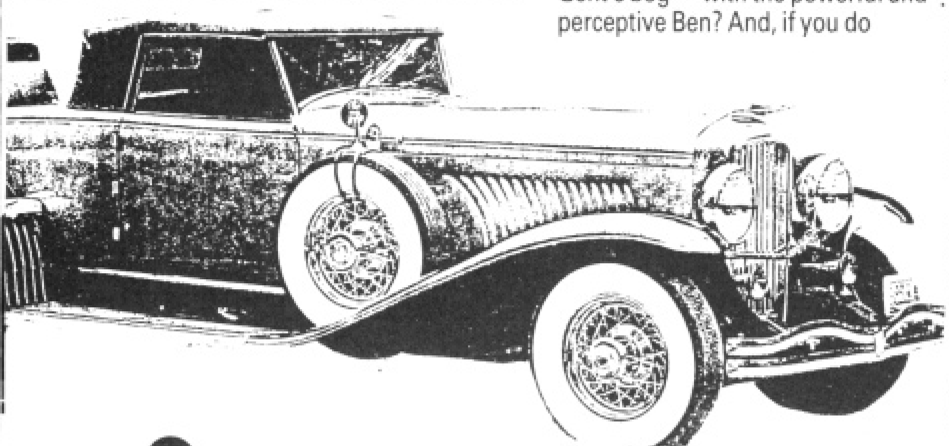
The first step to be negotiated in your climb to the "throne" is the Old Man. This grizzled, cigar-chewing wrinkly has run the Northside for yonks, but has had little success against the Capone-led Southside. So should you just walk straight in and blow him away? Or should you first test the water via a discreet meeting — usually held in a seedy Gent's bog — with the powerful and perceptive Ben? And, if you do decide to talk to Ben, how are you going to get *him* on your side? One rash word and he'll clam up or, worse still, turn against you.



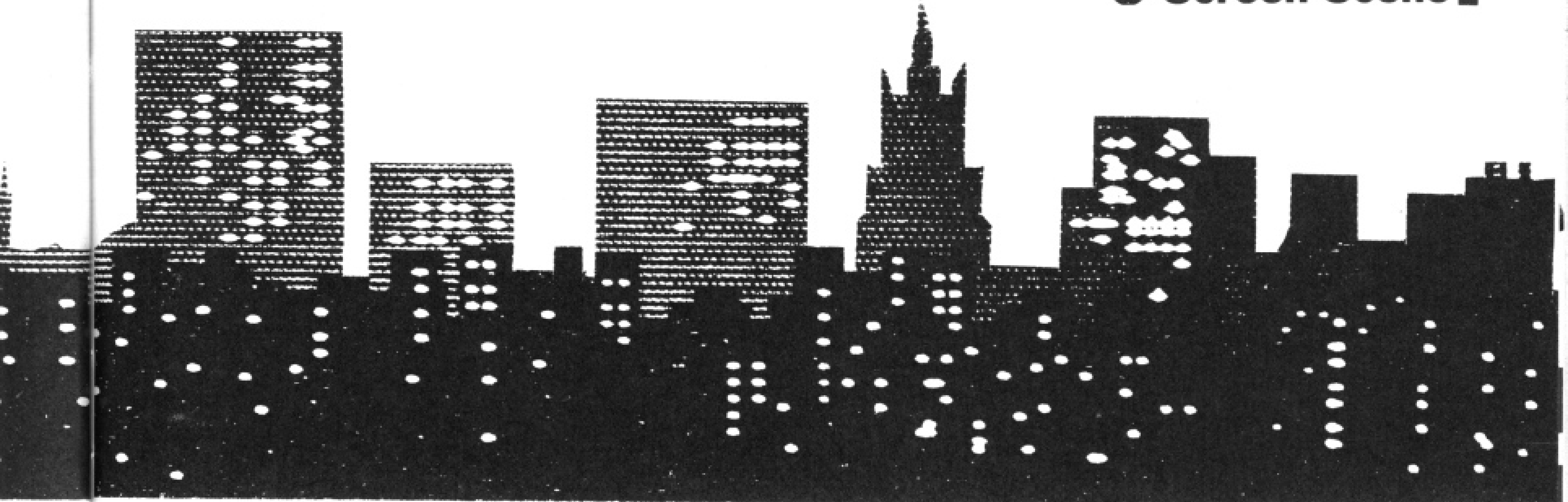
An ambush goes wrong for the Northsiders.



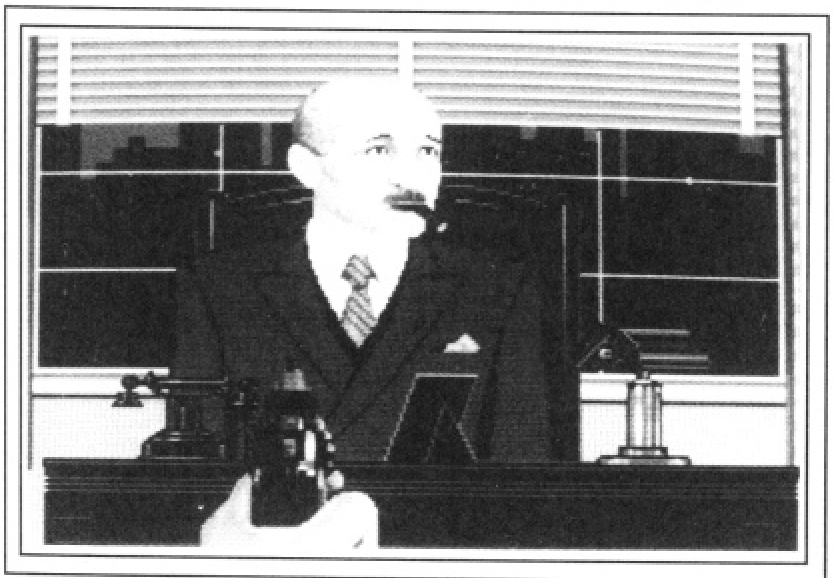
Pinky's desktop and GHQ.



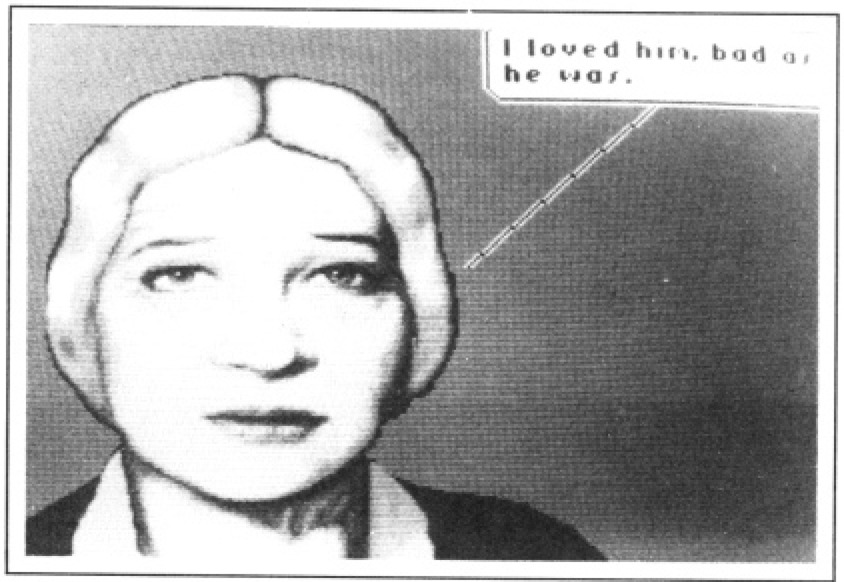
Then there's the bent politician, Alderman Burke — pay him off, or ignore him? Your girl, Lola — do you keep her sweet or treat her mean to maintain your reputation for toughness? Other members of the Northside mob — impress them with bravado and risk being shown up, or play it cool and hope that works? Each decision has a



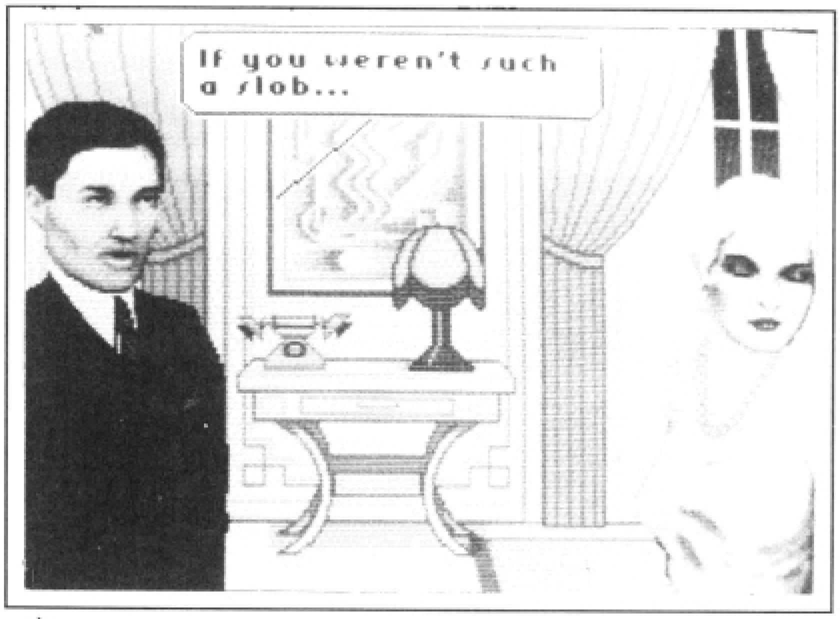
CHICAGO



Getting the drop on The Old Man.



A mourning mother speaks.



Pinky displays his chivalerous side.

consequence, or, more usually, several, and each game you play unfolds differently throwing up a new relationship between you, Pinky, and those with whom you come in contact in your quest for number one spot.

At certain points in the game, one of your decisions will lead you into a short arcade-style sequence. For instance, if you decide to waste the Old Man, you'll actually have to guide your cursor to a vital spot and press the fire button. Move too slowly, or miss, and it'll be his turn and he don't usually miss! There's also a brief sequence when you have a try to guide a bomb from a moving car into one of the opposition's premises. These bits of arcade gameplay are clumsy and very simple — quite why they were included isn't really clear.

Indeed, all the movements that occur onscreen are pretty slow and unrealistic. The characters' mouths move when they speak — all speech is text rather than digitised, by the way — and make occasional hand and head gestures, but the animation really seems to have been an afterthought.

However, quibbles about character movement swiftly pale into insignficance beside the brilliant achievements of much of the rest of this product.

The graphics are superb, amusing, incredibly detailed and painstakingly accurate in their historical details (check out the art deco lampstand in Alderman Burke's office).

The soundtrack features some amazing digitised rinky-dink piano music which, against all the odds, manages to conjure up the atmosphere of speakeasies, fedoras and violin-cases.

But most of all, it's *King of Chicago*'s sheer playability that makes it exceptional. I defy anyone, even the most diehard shoot 'em up fiend, not to enjoy *KOC's* DIY stories. They're witty (just take Lola's repsonse to Pinky's appeal for a bit of nooky: "You'll get your loving when I get the car!"), they're historically fascinating, and they provide a brief, and useful, education in the tricky art of getting people to do what you want them to do. *(Must have a go — Ed).*

It's like life, really — choose wisely, or tonight you might sleep with the fishes.

Nick Kelly

Graphics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Sound	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Toughness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Endurance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Value	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8 Overall

Baccy Spitting — make that tin pot ring.





Plodding cowboys have to copy the dancing girl

Shoot the foaming pints (why not drink 'em Ed.)



Amiga
64/128
Magic Bytes
Price: £19.99

C.U. Screen Star

WESTERN GAMES



C.U. Screen Star

Milk the cow



Who has the strongest arm?



Back in time when men were men and the west was still wild, life was not all John Wayne, indians and arrows. In fact it was 350 days a year of pure boredom. But what of the other four days a year? Well they're taken up with what is probably *Summer Games* earliest American counterpart. Instead of Olympiads coming from the four corners of the world, passing strangers were asked to challenge the town's best sportsman.

Only six disciplines in this game though, but they do boast a mind dazzling 800 moves between them! Each one of the events is portrayed in wacky cartoon style graphics with excellent animation and colouring. And what of the events?

Armwestling requires timing rather than brute force and determination. There is an icon of an arm in the top centre of the screen, and when the muscle on that is on its maximum 'flex' you have to push up on the joystick. This will make the muscles on your arm icon increase and force your opponent's arm further towards the candle. Didn't I mention the candle? Well instead of relying on the referee's eye, the first that hits the candle will force the loser to scream out and declare his defeat. You can also cheat by propping your elbow up if the ref dozes off during the match.

After the wristbreaking armwrestling you have **Beer Shooting**. There are no scruples behind this event with the two town dunces being used to hold beer mugs, cider pots, glasses, bottles and a tiny little gold thing in the palm of their divvy little hands. You have to shoot the five objects in succession without your opponent hitting any. In other words it's definitely a case of being quick on the draw.

Fancy a bit of **Dancing**? You'd better because that's what comes next. It's a case of Simon says I'm afraid. Do as the dancing girl does. This can prove fun, apart from the comments of some of the front row spectators. And there's an added problem, every time you become out of the step with the music the pianist becomes very irate and has to be pacified by a beer. And you can only afford three.

C.U. Screen Star

Now you have **Quid Spitting**. Not the coins but 'baccy. You have to bite off a large chunk then get the joystick going in a rhythmic left to right movement, to make it nice and mallable. Select angle and power and fire away. You can choose one of two targets for your globule of tobacco, your opponent's bucket (the real target) or the opponent's face. The only advantange to gain from a full facial 'baccy assault is that it slows your opponent down for a while and obviously distracts him from his chewing.

What could possibly follow that? It's the age old sport of **Cow Milking**. What will happen here is you will either spend the event suffering from a complete lack of timing with the cow beating you're brains out with its tail, or you might get it together and pull a pint. I ended up with a headache and one very irate cow.

And finally to finish it all off nicely (if you're still alive that is) is the **Eating Competition**. Balance a mouthful of beans on your spoon, cram them into your mouth and chew with a true decathlon wobbling action on the joystick. If you don't waggle fast enough you wind up swallowing it whole and belching a lot. What I didn't find in the instruction for this event is that by going right and pressing fire on the joystick you kick your opponent under the table.

The game is full of great effects, cartoon graphics, and background animation. The sound is great too, though that tends to be expected on Amiga software nowadays. Definitely the best sport simulation to date on the Amiga. Great fun too. One for the Christmas shopping list, if not sooner. Well designed, produced and executed, a sure fire winner pardner.

Mark Patterson

Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

8
Overall

Amiga
Simply Megaware
Price: £23.00 disk

The Amiga has begun to get a reputation as a great machine with an awful software base. Things, however, are beginning to look up. *Garrison* arrived on my desk.

Even as the first loading screen appeared I knew I was in for a treat. While the rest of the game loaded, the screen displayed the game's title, and a sampled bass-drum thudded methodically in the background. After swapping the discs around (annoyingly this is necessary both on single and double disc drive systems) and waiting a few seconds, the title screen appeared.

WOWEEE!!! The picture on the screen is fabulously drawn in shades of silver and grey, with the word *Garrison* displayed at the top in continuously changing colours (just as with the Original *Gauntlet* screen). Most stunning, however, is the music. Using the guitar riff from 'Money for Nothing', and throwing in some Hendrix-style improvisation (together with thumping drums and energetic bass), this game has got to



Keys to collect, ghosts to avoid . . .

GARRIS

The cheaply produced packaging and hand-typed manual may lead potential purchasers to overlook this game, don't. Up until this day, *Starglider* was the best piece of software for the Amiga, *Garrison* can now justifiably lay claim to that crown.

Even the package has a clue to what lays within; on the back there is a screenshot of what looks like a rather well-known multi-player arcade game whose name also begins with G. Yup, you've guessed it, *Garrison* is the first *Gauntlet* clone for the Amiga.

have *the* best sound I have ever heard on a home computer.

The first 20 minutes was therefore spent listening to the music which is programmed by another German team, Sound Creation Studio, and a pretty talented bunch they must be. What is most impressive about the music is that it is not sampled. This team has taken a much slower route, by actually using the Amiga to program the music with, but if this is anything to go by that's the way to do it. The spot effects, too, are lovingly created with some spectacular splurges and crashes.

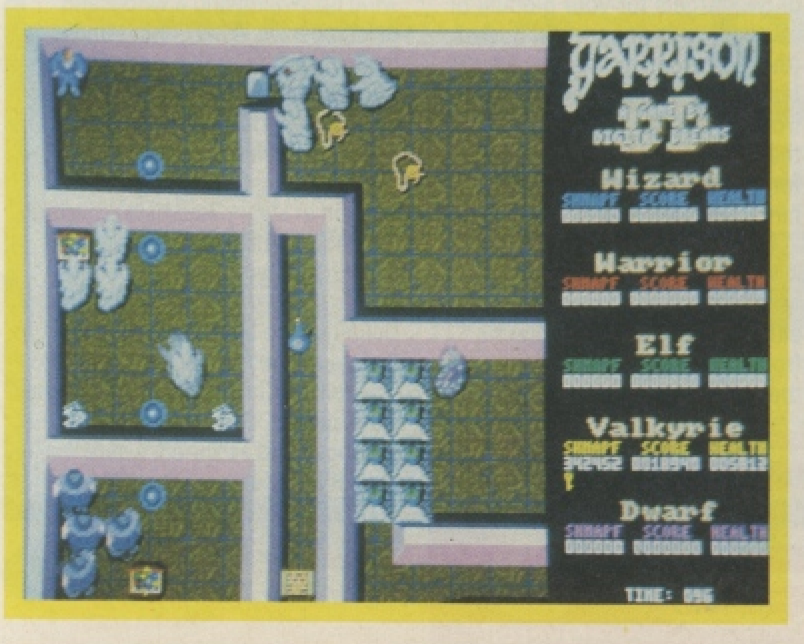
Once I managed to get over how good the music was, I started to look in awe at the depth of the game. In simple terms you could describe it as a *Gauntlet* clone, but when you look carefully at this game there is, if possible, more to this game than even the original arcade version of *Gauntlet* (*good — Ed.*).

The game allows you to play any two of the five available characters simultaneously (yes, that is the major drawback), using joysticks to control the characters. However, you can choose to play all five characters, and then as you get to various levels you can choose a character most suited to each level.

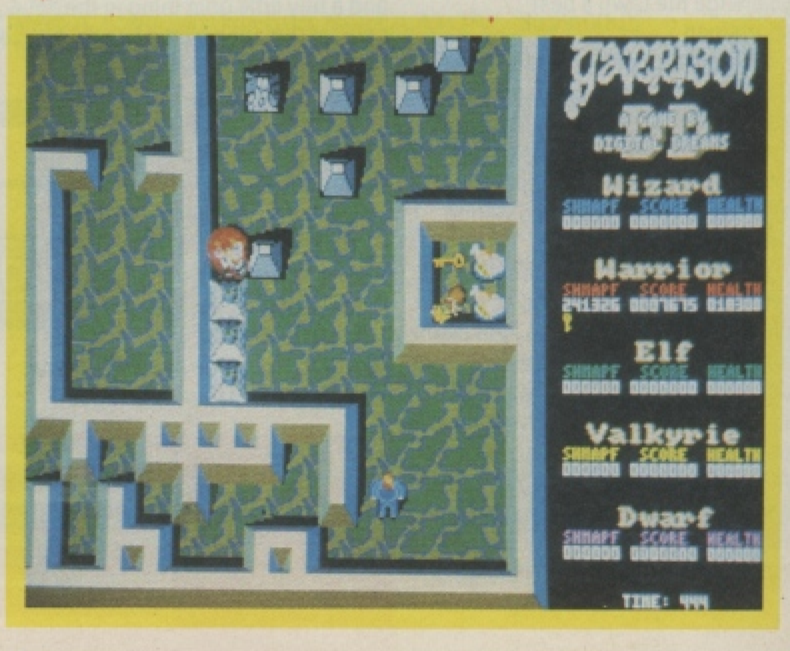
All of the five characters have different names — Wizard, Warrior, Elf, Valkyrie and Dwarf — and not surprisingly they also have different characteristics; more power, speed, magic power, etc. The only new character is the Dwarf, who is an excellent partner for any of the powerful players, due to his excellent speed and manoeuverability.

In play, the game has all the depth of the arcade game, with 128 levels of frantic action, ranging from short

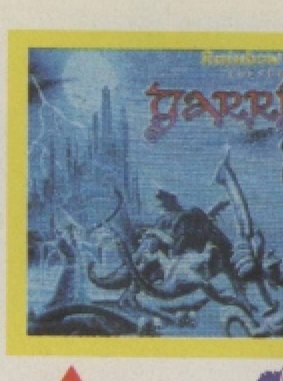
. . . haven't we seen this somewhere before?



Sure, but who cares if the game's a smash.



ON



Garrison — the Amiga at its best.

and simple to mind-bendingly soul destroying, and including my most hated levels, the invisible ones, and some in which one wrong move leads to almost certain death. Most of the enemies appear to be similar to the arcade version with thousands of ghosts, goblins as well as the devilish little blue ones (*bit technical — Ed.*).

The graphics are really remarkable. Each floor has a different pattern on it, and all the characters are detailed beyond belief. This, combined with excellent animation, and the smoothest scrolling yet on the Amiga really reflects the effort and skill that has gone into this game.

The only immediately disappointing aspect of the game is that the characters that you play all look the same (unless you have a machine with 1 Mbyte), but this is a very minor criticism. The score of each character is displayed permanently, as is each player's health and his ability at each of five qualities: Speed, Hand-to-hand combat, Magic, Armour, Shot speed and Fire power. Overall, I have found *Valkyrie* the best compromise, especially when used in conjuction with *Wizard*.

Oh, I almost forgot to mention, there is actually a plot to this game. Apparently you have to rescue a princess, name of Angelique, but as we all know, this kind of plot is generally thought up by over-anxious PR people in a drunken stupor (©Andrew Wright 1987).

Overall, *Garrison* is quite simply brilliant. It is the most playable game yet for the Amiga, it is the closest thing to an arcade game yet to be produced on a home micro and it should not be missed by any Amiga owner. In the UK it is sold by a company called Simply-Megaware, priced at £23 (still too much, but in this case more justified than most).

The one problem I can envisage is a legal one. *Garrison* is remarkably similar to *Gauntlet*, and US Gold say they are planning an Amiga version of *Gauntlet*. Somehow I can see a conflict developing here. This apart, let's hope that the company behind *Garrison* are busy developing new games, and not just arcade clones.

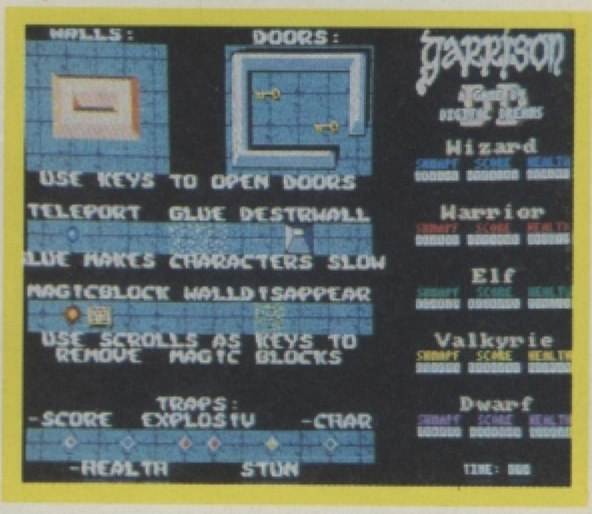
Bert Scroggins

C.U. Screen Star

C.U. Screen Star

C.U. Screen Star

A brief guide for aspiring *Garrison*-eers.

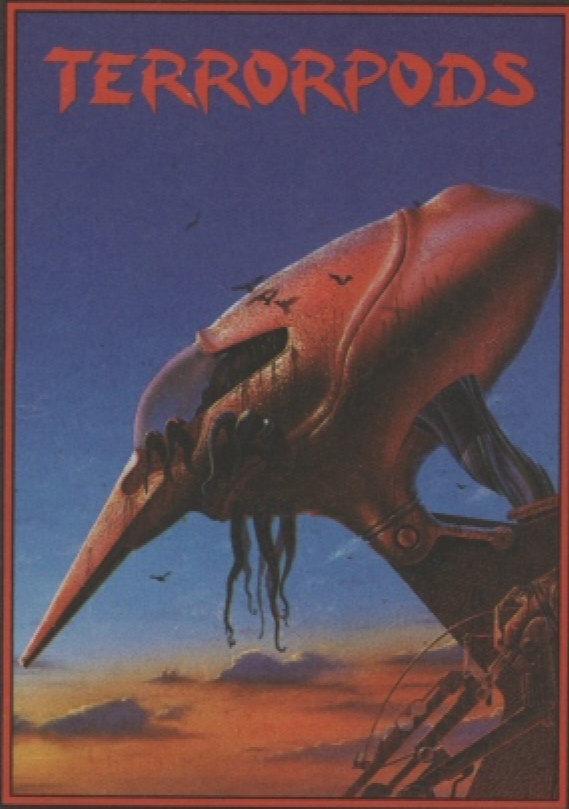


Don't look now, but you're being followed.

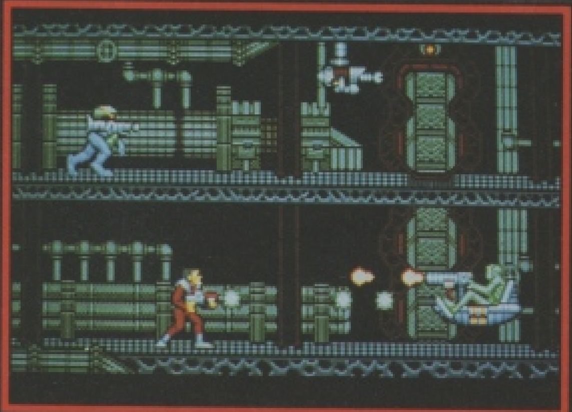


Graphics	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Sound	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Toughness	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Endurance	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
Value	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	
		9 Overall


OBLITERATOR


TERRORPODS


Barbarian






Barbarian

Amiga
English
Price: £19.95

For a game that informs you that it was inspired by the ZZ Top video "Rough Boy" the immediate audio-visual impact of *Leviathan* is quite surprising.

There is no sign of any of the ZZ Top trade marks — no leggy blondes in stockings and suspenders, no heavy guitar, or bearded geezers.

What you are immediately aware of however is still pretty impressive in its own right — an incredibly smooth-scrolling and detailed 3D landscape.

The storyline goes like this. You are taken thirty three seconds into the future to where "pop videos inspire crazy fantasies in the minds of ordinary people" — which is basically pretty silly because all that is going to happen in thirty three seconds is that I am going to finish writing this sentence. See, told you. Anyway, never mind about all that nonsense. What we have here is a shoot 'em up in the *Zaxxon* mould — pure and simple. Oh, and there aren't any pop videos in it either.

Leviathan's main selling point is the manouverability of the ship and it certainly can twist and turn in all directions. It flips — just like the Manta in *Uridium*, only it happens in 3D perspective with very impressive animation. It can also roll sideways and attack the aliens at the same time, and move up and down as the game scrolls and in and out of the screen as well.

The problem with all this flyability is that it makes the ship very difficult to control. You really have to master the eight different joystick movements that fly the ship. These are move left, move right, climb, dive, change direction left, direction right, speed up and slow down. Just as in a beat 'em up, joystick control is all important.

I would have been happier with less control over the ship. Had it been easier to fly the sheer enjoyment of chasing the aliens and making them eat photon death would have been maximised.

The aim of all this scrolling shooting is to clear out all the aliens in three separate zones. You must destroy all of them within a certain time limit in order to progress to the next level.

The landscapes take advantage of the Amiga's superb graphics — really illustrating for the first time the quantum leap in quality between a graphically good 64 game (which *Leviathan* is) and a graphically good Amiga game.

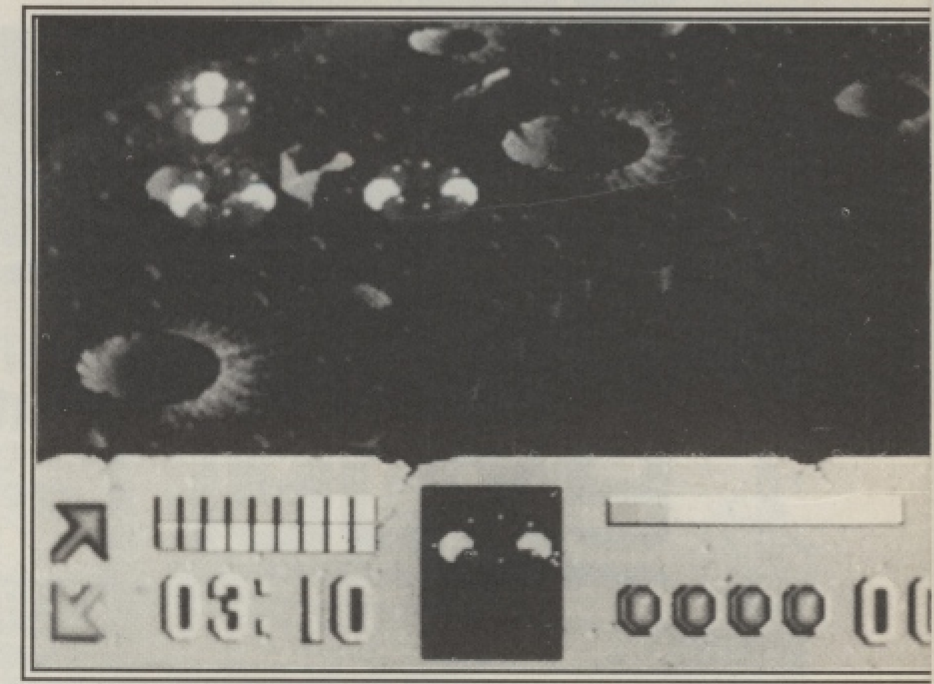
The first stage is *Moonscape* with its custy craters and a metallic blue surface, then comes *Cityscape* with futuristic buildings and satellite dishes and, best of all, there's *Greekscape* with statues and a silver surface colour. Each of these zones is stuffed full of vicious aliens. I counted at least ten different types. The most impressive of these are the Delta-shaped fighters and swarming coloured balls. One gripe with these aliens is that there is a certain place on the screen where you can fly and then pick the aliens off as they fly into the screen. This makes the game too easy. Of course you don't have to do this — in fact it's really stupid if you do because taking an alien from behind or from the side is much more satisfying.

Leviathan's flight information panel is pretty basic but at least everything on it works and serves a purpose. It includes a timer, number of ships left monitor, height gauge, fuel gauge, and enemy identification window.

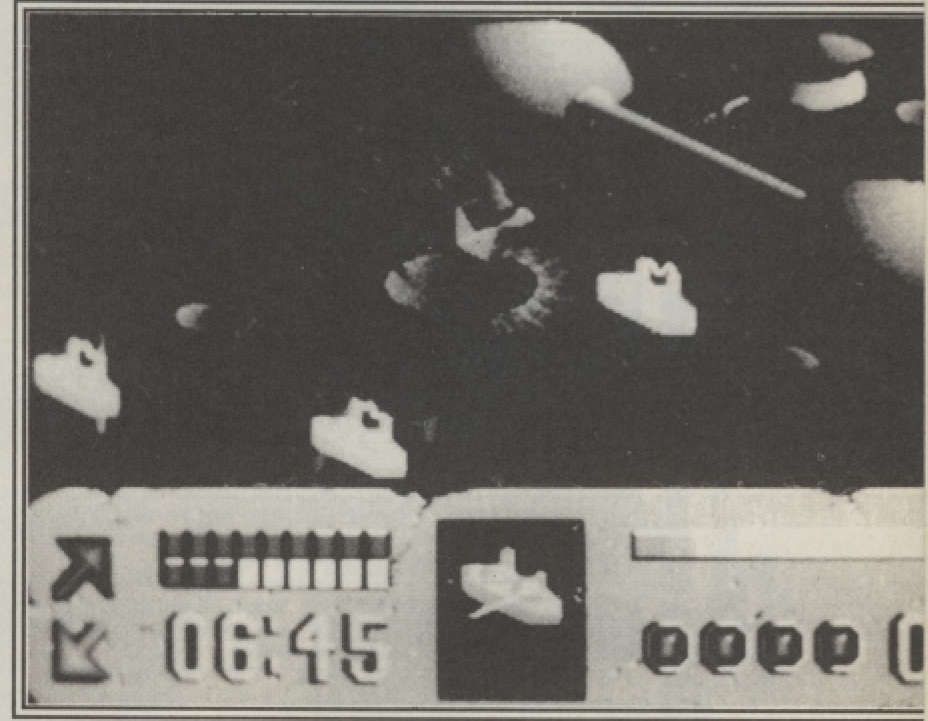
The Amiga is desperately short of decent shoot 'em ups so the launch of a new one is an encouraging sign. I can't help thinking however that the design behind *Leviathan* is just a little bit ambitious. It looks great and sounds OK but I can't see it keeping me up until the small hours.

Eugene Lacey

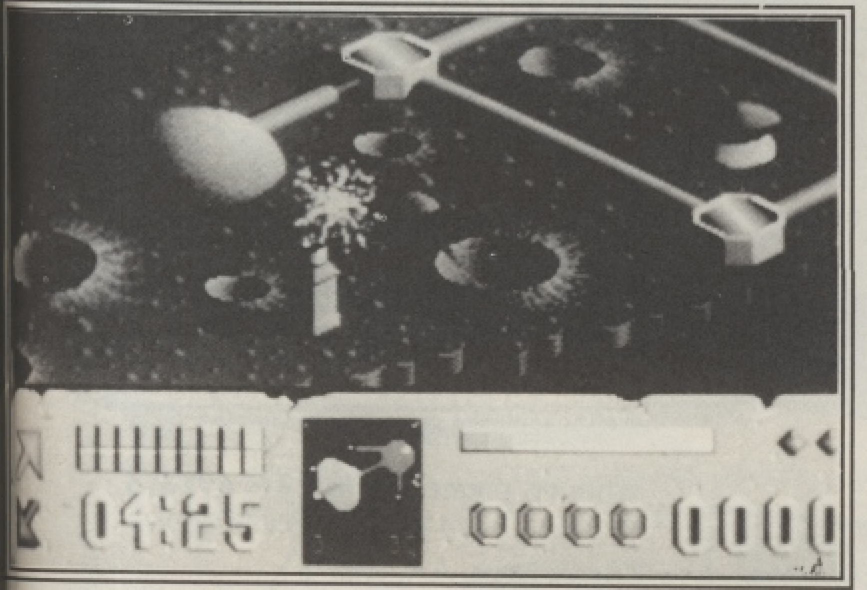
LEVIATHAN



▲ A ramble through Moonscape.



▲ Take that, you enemies of freedom!



▲ Watch out for the . . . too late.

Rating	Score (bar reaches, on a 1–10 scale)
Graphics	7
Sound	6
Toughness	7
Endurance	4
Value	5

5
Overall

this Christmas time!!!

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INTO THE VALLEY

NOT A PENNY MORE NOT A PENNY LESS

64/128
Price:
£14.95 cass
£19.95 disk

Jeffrey Archer's books have become best sellers — including 'Not A Penny More, Not a Penny Less', upon which this adventure is based. After struggling through the book prior to attempting the game, I can't see why. Not particularly well written, the story is extremely contrived, and set in a world far removed from most of its readers — the society rich who aim to make a quick pile for no work, by buying shares after an inside tip-off. But their gamble doesn't pay off. The value of the shares slumps within days of the purchase, a feat engineered by one Harvey Metcalfe, the villain of the piece.

Serves them right for being so greedy and parasitic, I say. Nevertheless, apart from being financially ruined, they feel swindled, and decide to steal back 'their' money from him — a total of $250,000, not a penny more, not a penny less. Let's face it, they're nothing if not honest.

The paperback is included in the package with the adventure game, which is, alas, even worse and had me gasping in disbelief at the obvious ignorance of its programmers.

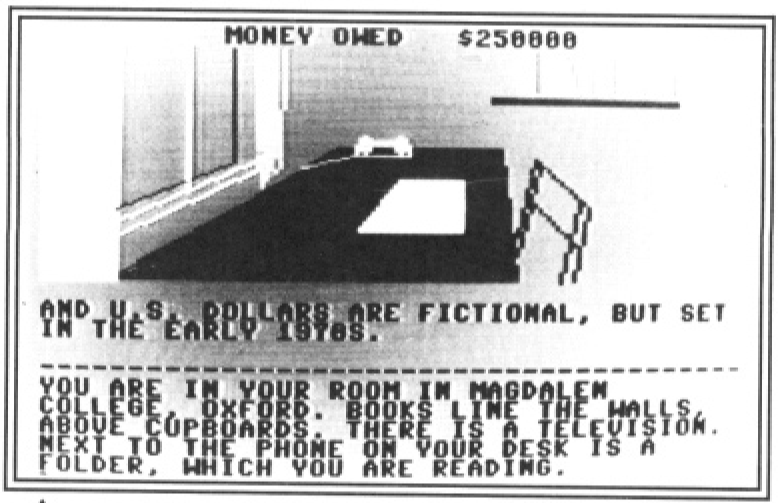
The first thing to be noticed, is the way the command typed at the bottom of the screen disappears as soon as RETURN is pressed. True, the last command entered can be recalled by a function key, but that is of little use if different vocabulary is being tested to carry out an action, as the previous unsuccessful attempts cannot be listed. Believe me, the vocabulary is so limited that many tries are often necessary.

All the time this experimentation is going on, or other inappropriate commands are entered, the player is insulted with such replies as STOP WASTING YOUR TIME, and YOU SPEAK A DIFFERENT VERSION OF ENGLISH TO ME.

The next incredible thing to hit the player comes after he has picked up a few items, and tries to list his inventory. There was no command I could find, nor any given in the instructions, to do this. I tried I, INV, INVENT, INVENTORY, TAKE INVENTORY, and LIST, all returning a suitably sarcastic reply.

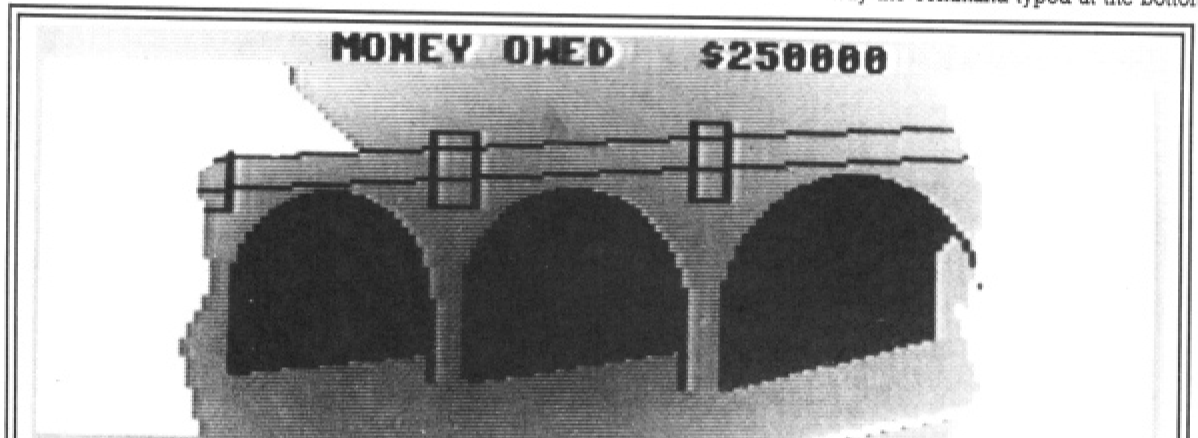
It appears that items that have been taken cannot be dropped, and early on in the game, a camera I took from a cupboard was still there when I opened the cupboard again.

Perhaps the worst feature of the game — worse even than the graphics — although admittedly it can be turned off, is the speech. It seems to be emanating from an Upper Class Twit, either brain-damaged, or suffering from an excess of champers. Thus, when I reached the classic STOP DAWDLIN' AND RETURN TO MAGDALEN (you play the part of an Oxford professor) I rushed for the toilet to puke, and even Eugene's promised antidote of ten pints of brown ale in a public bar, followed by a meat Vindaloo at his place, failed to persuade me to return to the game.



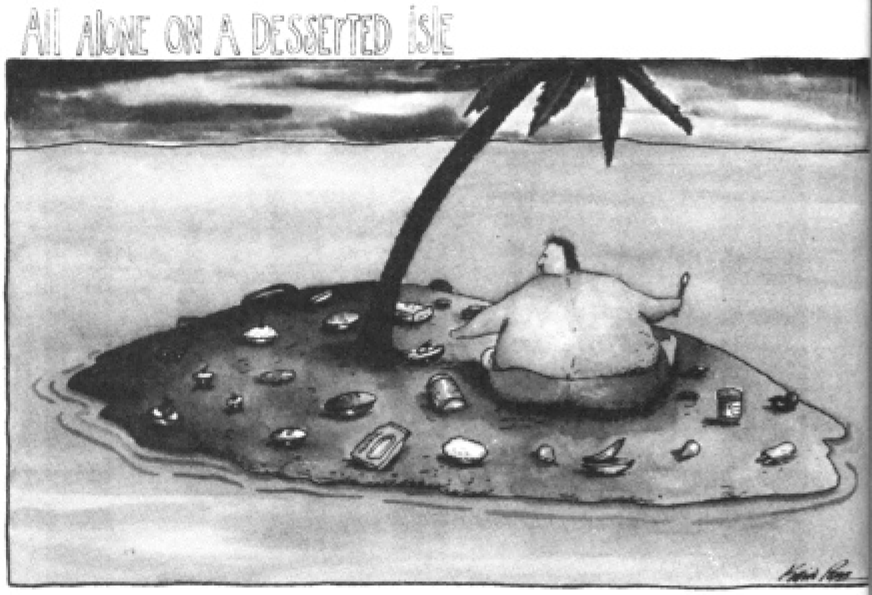
▲ What's in the folder, pictures of Monica?

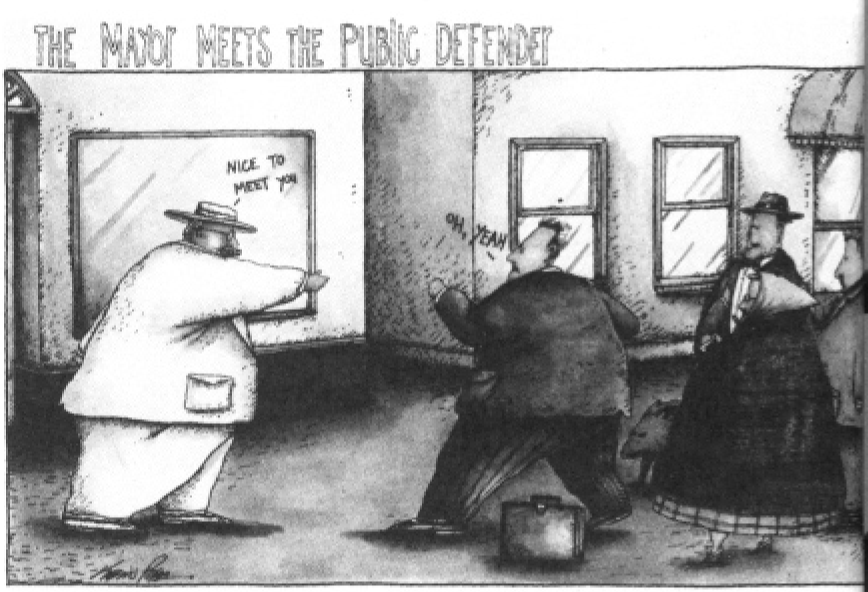
▼ Out for a jolly old stroll



Graphics 3
Playability 4
Puzzleability 4
Overall 3

INTO THE VALLEY





▲ **Bord and Nert — roonerisms spule ko!**

NORD AND BERT COULDN'T MAKE HEAD OR TAIL OF IT

Infocom/ Activision 64/128 Price: £24.99 Amiga Disk: £29.99

Players of Infocom games are no doubt aware of the 'Interactive Fiction' tag put to their games – meaning they are stories. Nevertheless, they are 'adventures' as well, in the general sense of the word, as well as in the computer-game sense. Or at least, they have been until now. The adventure game format is nothing if not flexible, and in *Nord and Bert*, Infocom have come a long way from the traditional text adventure. Regular fans may, whilst not disliking this text only game, be rather disappointed that it is not the type of game they have come to know and to love.

Nord and Bert performs almost exactly the same as other Infocom games on screen. It has a parser, and indeed, the method of communicating with it is identical, too.

Eight short 'stories' comprise this little piece of nonsense, for nonsense it is, and nonsense is what it sets out to be. Each story involves the use of wordplay, and the words must be guessed or spotted by the player, to reach the end. A score is registered for each episode, and to complete it, the total must be achieved. The final section cannot be played until all the others, which may be played in any order, have been completed.

The stories are not necessarily logical pieces – rather they are contrived to fit around the use of the puns, sayings, spoonerisms, and other linguistic quirks, that author, Jeff (Ballyhoo) O'Neill has collated, and cunningly interwoven.

The sayings and spoonerisms are good fun, but it's not easy to spot them all. It's even more difficult to spot the Americanisms. In *Eat Your Words*, for example, much of the time it seems you must be nasty to the waitress in the Teapot Cafe. Reading the sign over the stairs, you see it is marked 'Comeuppance'. So you take the sign, and 'Give the waitress her comeuppance'. Hmm... Once upstairs, you notice the ceiling is very low. 'Hit the ceiling'. I would have preferred to hit the roof. Whilst seated at a table on which sat a salt shaker, I came by a piece of advice. I tried to 'Take advice with a pinch of salt', but the program would have none of it! It was looking for the word 'grain' – and no alternative was allowed for those of us who speak English, although, to be fair, had I shaken the shaker (which I didn't the first time round) a grain would have fallen out.

Buy The Farm makes a lot more sense, providing you're the sort who has the wit to put his nose to the grindstone. This little story is well intepreted, and I only came across one phrase that didn't make sense: 'Hit the broad side of the barn'. Would you have thought of it, given the context?

The puns in the *Shopping Bizarre*, are quite involved, since you not only have to spot the pun, but enter it to change the object into its pun, for use in solving other puns. But would you have spotted 'pudding' for 'putting' as a pun? I didn't!

Spoonerisms, in *Shaking A Tower*, were my favourite choice. This story has a very complicated sequence featuring a leopard, a book, a bonfire, and an icicle, involving spotting a couple of spoonerisms, examining things, and spoonerising the result!

One story, I didn't find at all amusing. In *Act The Part*, where you simply take the part of an actor in a farcical sitcom, and carry out corny acts like putting a whoopee cushion under your stooge. Two points are even gained by being the 'feed' to a couple of 'knock knock' jokes.

And one story I just did not understand at all. *A Manor Of Speaking* consisted entirely of gems that left me completely cold – despite dipping into the Invisiclues built into the game. Inside this crazy house, I found an old empty bottle. Another location had an antique mantlepiece. Seems I should have 'Put the old bottle on the mantel'. And the rest were like that too – I inadvertently ran up a point on my score by turning the key in a clock! I can't say I was overcome with mirth!

Full marks to Infocom for branching out with something highly original, and extremely cleverly put together. But don't play *Nord and Bert* expecting anything like any other Infocom game you've ever played. You won't get it, and you'll be disappointed. Don't play *Nord and Bert* if English isn't your native tongue. Nord and Bert is a game of American wit. Do play it with a group of friends, perhaps over a few drinks.

GRAPHICS:	n/a
PLAYABILITY:	7
PUZZLEABILITY:	6
OVERALL:	6

INTO THE VALLEY

21st CENTURY WARRIOR APACHE

GUNSHIP

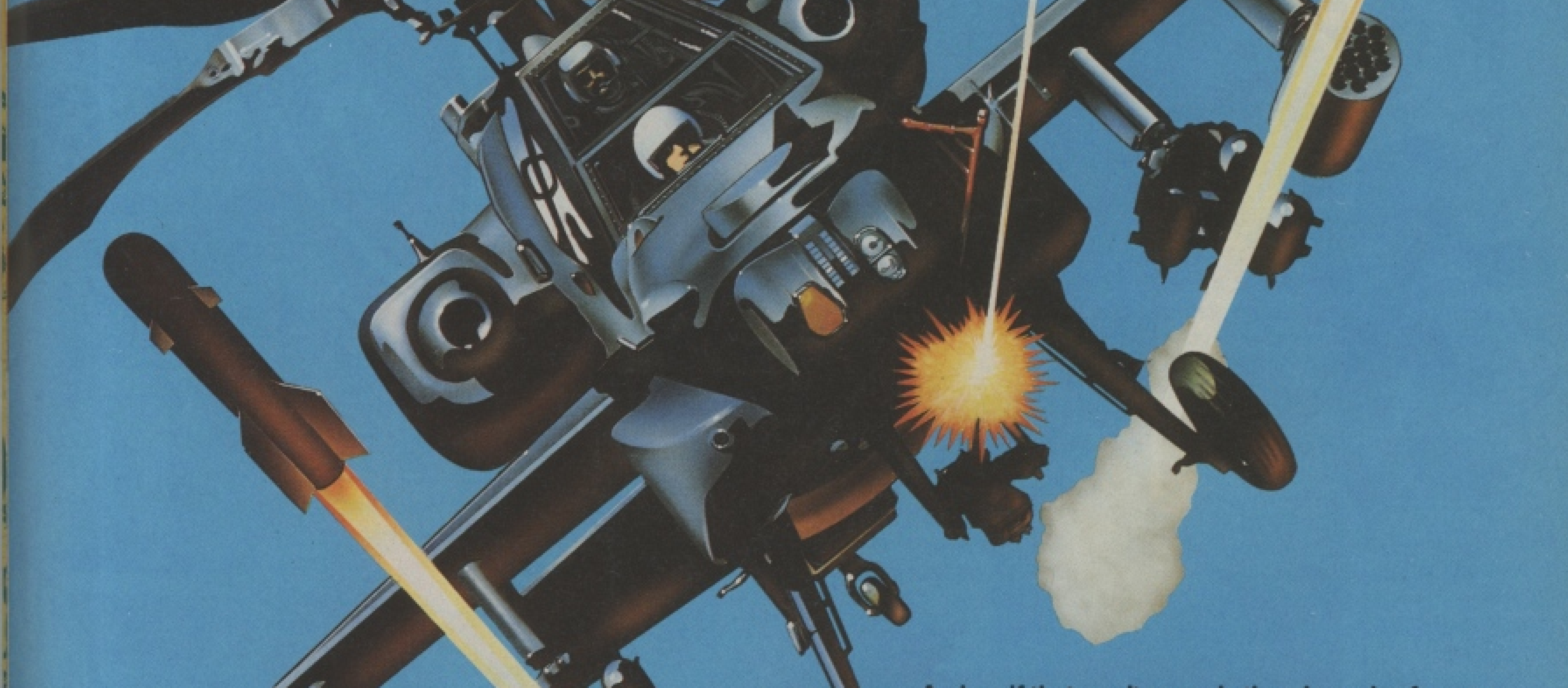
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2 INTO THE COMPARENT CALM OF THE WHITE HOUSE BURSTS THE MANIC DR. MEGALOMANN. "STEP DOWN MR PRESIDENT, SUBMIT TO MY RULE OR TODAY AMERICA WILL KNOW A PLAGUE FROM WHICH DEATH WILL SEEM A HAPPY RELEASE".
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GO!

INTO THE VALLEY



In the cellar below the inn in *Zodiac*

ZODIAC THE SECRET OF LIFE

Incentive (Double Gold Label)
64/128
Price: £7.95 cass

Your mission is to find the twelve signs of the Zodiac and deliver them to the evil wizard Ramus, before he destroys your tribe.

The method of solving the rather weak problems in this adventure, is to visit every location possible, pick up everything in sight, and then proceed to open up new exits. Initially, there are some temporary dead ends, which if proceeded beyond, result in instant death. But provided you are carrying the required object, the problem dissolves. Thus it is possible, by chance, to visit the locations in the right order, and walk through much of the game without encountering any difficulties!

For example, there is a chest in a cottage, which must be unlocked, and hides the exit to a swamp. The swamp cannot be entered without a pair of wellies — but you only need to hold them, you don't need to actually wear them. So if you happen to come across the key and the wellies before venturing into the chest no problem presents itself.

The graphics are small, fairly meaningless pictures surrounded by a rather large border which is identical for every location, except in colour.

A simple adventure, ideal for beginners, but without the necessary mystery and imagination to get them hooked on adventure games.

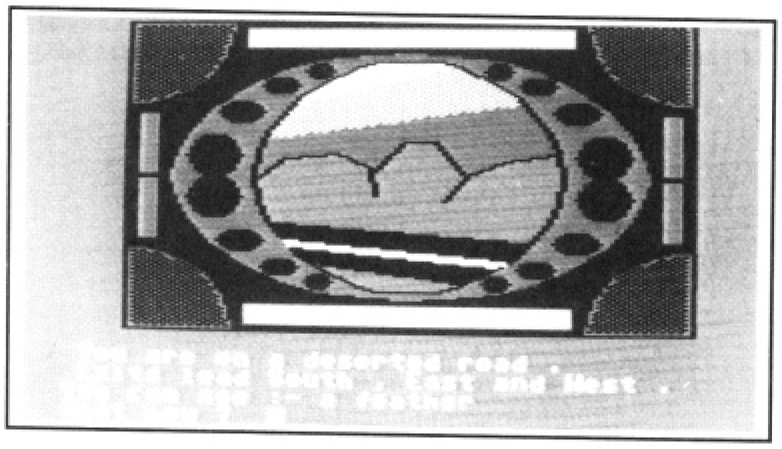
THE SECRET OF LIFE

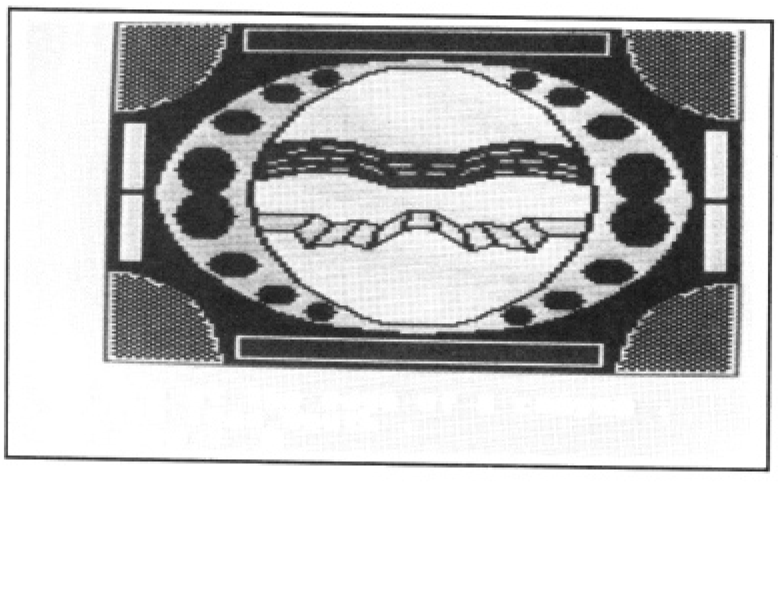
This is a three part adventure, involving finding the secret of life in two houses. When you enter the first house, you find the way you came in has vanished, leaving you stuck inside — unless you can find the way out. You must also find the password to take you into Part 2 of the game.

Mundane pictures accompany most of the locations — passages, stairways, and bedrooms make very boring viewing. And there's some odd bugs around — the first bedroom I searched, not only had its own private bathroom, but a bath in the bedroom itself! Strange…

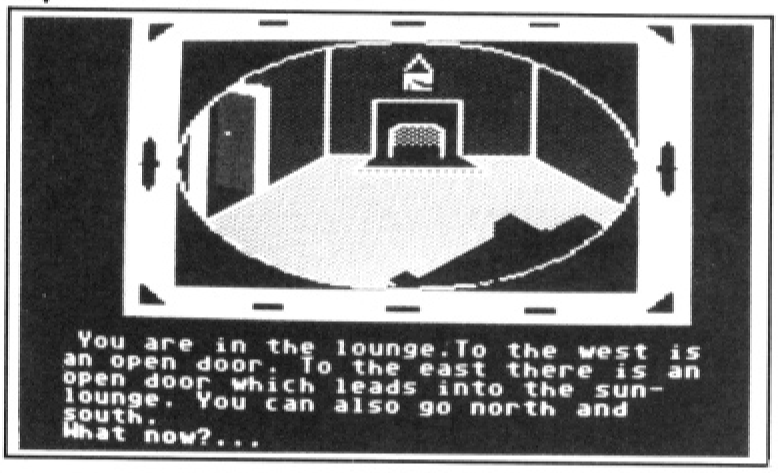
Try as I might, I found the game unplayable. The combination of colours at a number of locations — green on an orange background — rendered the text completely illegible on my TV, despite adjusting colour, contrast, and brightness in every conceivable combination. And I do not blame the TV. I have been using it to play and review adventures ranging from minor Quilled and GACked ones, to major Level 9 and Magnetic Scrolls epics, on all manner of computers including the C-64 and Atari ST, for years, with no problems.

Perhaps this might actually be an absorbing game — but I would only recommend it if you are the sort who can solve adventure with your eyes closed



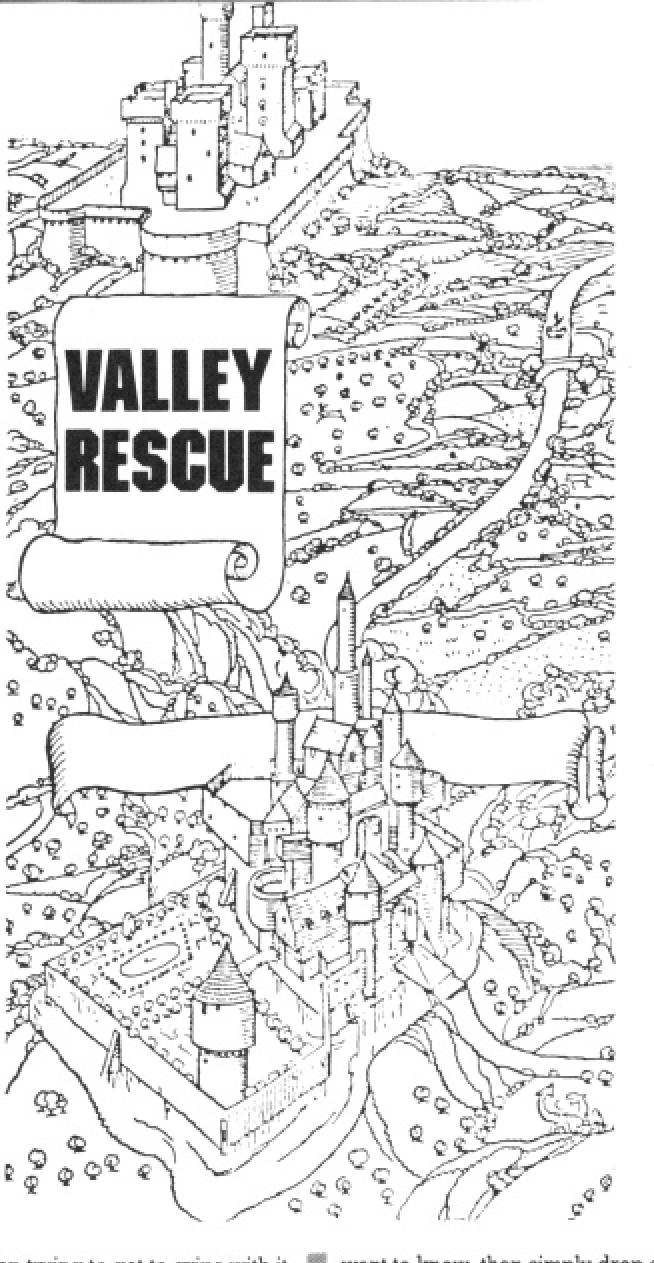


Is the secret of life behind the fireplace?



	Zodiac	Secret
GRAPHICS:	4	3
PLAYABILITY:	8	2
PUZZLEABILITY:	5	n/a
OVERALL:	4	1

INTO THE VALLEY



VALLEY RESCUE

A CLOSER LOOK AT… SPIDERMAN

At the suggestion of Tony Makos, of Milngavie, we look at how to attack *Questprobe 2 — Spiderman*.

The lift shaft goes up three levels from where the game starts, and it is essential to get to the penthouse at the top fairly early on, if you are to progress very far. If you encounter an obstruction in the shaft, remember your spider strength!

Mysterio is an illusion, and cannot be killed. The mirror on his floor, although it may be looked in, is really a red herring, so if you were thinking of doing something clever with it, forget it! Jump to Mysterio's cloud, and do a bit of directional feeling!

Ringmaster is a hypnotist, so don't look at him! Hydroman's state can be changed by a device in the Penthouse, which also houses the (real) formula for making the web fluid. Don't worry about partial success when you make it — that's all you need! Then you will have the means to get the bio-gem, and to pass beyond the fan in the air-conditioning ducts. All you need then, is a shocking experience, and the way out of a weighty problem…

Clues roll down the gentle slopes of The Valley, and they come from far and wide. Turkey was the source of help this month for Ian Coveney, who was recently reported struggling against the *Wizard Of Akyrz*. Can Octurk wrote from Istanbul with a clue — look it up in the clues section, Ian! Meanwhile, Can himself needs some help! "Where is the second hand of the Harbinger clock in *Castle Grayskull*?" he asks of any adventurer who has mastered *Masters Of The Universe*.

Craig Mathieson of Victoria in Australia, is looking for a good horse, and thinks Tweedle should help? How? Also in *Dodgy Geezers*, he wants Cracker to join him! Can he? Should he?

Jonathan, who lives in Codnor in Derbyshire, and whose surname I could not decode, is after some general hints by way of helping him to pinpoint who killed Mr Robnor, in Infocom's *Deadline*. He can't find the evidence he urgently needs — a cup.

Remember *The Quest*, a disk adventure from Commodore, often supplied bundled with a disk drive? Paul Kersch of Ingatestone in Essex has been trying to get to grips with it, on and off, for three years. He can't remember how to pass the guard there. How can he get the maker to help him, how can he get the sword, and what can he use against the serpents?

The Valley Rescue Service is here to help lost adventurers find their sanity, and regain their game! You'll find help on this page in the clues section, but if you don't see what you want to know, then simply drop a line to The Valley with your problem.

You won't have to keep your fingers crossed for a reply from a monthly catalogue of readers willing to help — The Valley will reply to you direct, hopefully with a good clue! So send in those problems, and clues, too, if you can, to The Valley, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

CAMPBELL'S COMMENT

Adventurers are extremely friendly towards one another. They have to be — everyone needs a few friends. If you spend most of your life spreading death, destruction, and frustration, around the population at large, from whom else are you likely to be able to get a bit of sympathy and understanding?

Content in the knowledge that the worst thing likely to happen might be the firing of a water pistol, or the release of a rather dim hamster at the meal table, I suggested to a very select group of adventurers that we get together for dinner at this year's Personal Computer World show. Fergus McNeill of Delta 4 and his right-hand enchantress, Anna Popkess, toured Olympia to sound out support. Co-ordinating the effort at *ADBIN HQ on the Commodore User stand, I was soon presented with a long list of potential bingers, and not the slightest idea of where to go!

And so it was, that on the Thursday evening, The Warwick Arms was where ADBIN commenced. We started off in a small group at the Warwick Road end of the bar, and

gradually the pub got fuller. We got Fuller, too, as those *Nord And Bert* players who drink London Pride will realise!

Ten pound notes soon started flying into the kitty at the speed of a 1541, as Pete and the Austins arrived, followed by Tim Gilbert and his fine feathered pen. Close on their heels, came Daniel (The Defector) Gilbert, and Adrian Bott, late and sometimes of Valley Rescue and CU's famous Play To Win series. We had been imbibing happily for some time, when it came to our notice that contrary to our belief, the other half of our group had actually arrived before us, and had been enjoying a side party at the far end of the bar!

Lured only by the glint of the kitty, we were joined by Fergus and Anna, Paul Coppins of Rainbird, C+VG Helpline and Valley Rescue expert, and Christian Martensen — adventure writer and Deputy Editor of the Danish magazine COMputer. More and yet more adventurers poured in. Ken Gordon from Magnetic Scrolls brought the husky Anita's apologies, but left her sore throat behind in favour of Rod Steggles, author of the plant pot plant in plant pot plot. Close behind were Mr and Mrs Zork themselves, Dave Lebling and his wife Janet. Gosh! Fergus had travelled far and wide to drum up support!

Just as we thought we were safe, straight from Ireland came the two schoolmarms from St. Brides, the Misses Priscilla Langridge and Marianne Scarlett. So, stuffing a few dozen Hintsheets down the backs of our trousers just in case, we ordered another round! Not as good as poteen, we were assured!

With so many adventurers gathered together under one roof, we knew how the Royal family all travelling on the same Air Zalagasa flight must feel. Being adventurers, we openly stood on the pavement for a group photo, aware that had we been suddenly zapped by a raiding party from the ARCFRINGE (arcaders do) just up the road, it would have spelled instant death to Adventure as the punters know it. But we had cheated. We might have appeared courageous to the casual observer, but we had, in fact, secretly executed a RAM SAVE before venturing outside!

Making a move now, our party tottered S,W,E,W,E,W,S to the Bistro Benito, in Earls Court Road. Perhaps it wasn't merely luck that caused Benito to allocate us a room to ourselves. Let's face it, it was at the back, out of sight of potential clients passing by. We prepared to sit down to a hearty meal, but not before two of our party had mistaken the Goddess Model teleporter upstairs for a Gents toilet, and narrowly escaped transportation to Phobos, and the brass loincloth treatment.

It was an evening never to be forgotten! Fergus and Anna announced their engagement, Dave Lebling gave us a treatise on parsers entitled "The Guild Of Thieves Scanner", Paul Coppins found a bug in Mike Austin's soup, and we all laughed like drains at those dreadful Quilled adventures!

After the event, Anna donated the remains of the beer kitty — over £30 — to the NSPCC.

RESCUE IS AT HAND

APACHE GOLD:
Grow the fern with some fertilizer, and trade it for the moccasins!

WIZARDS OF AKYRZ:
To complete the game, go down from where the fox leaves you, dig in the tunnels, and tell the raven to drop the crown.

FANTASTIC FOUR:
Fly to the cave under cover of smoke, and open up a rescue shaft!

PLUNDERED HEARTS:
Ride piggy-back to the island . . . ?

STATIONFALL:
Make a pilot hole first, before drilling the main hole.

THE LURKING HORROR:
Terrify, but really terrify the urchin, for the means to attack the rest of them.

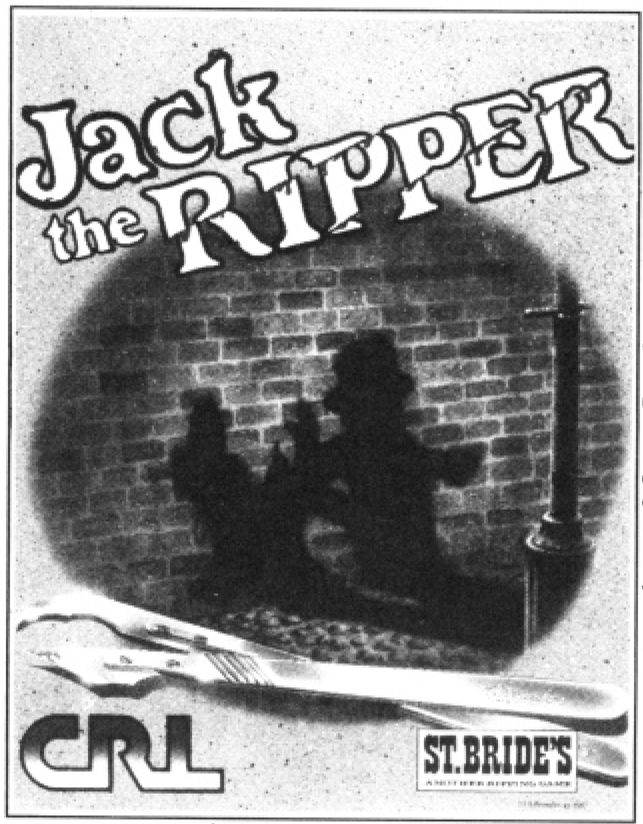
ZORK 2:
The lizard likes candy. Solve the well problem first.

NEWS

Three more horrors

CRL have more adventures lined up to send a chill down your spine. St. Bride's *Jack The Ripper*, due any time now, will be followed by another Rod Pike horror — *Wolf Man*. If that isn't enough to keep horror fans going, there's more to come! CRL have *Jekyll and Hyde* lined up for anyone who has not been scared to death by the first two!

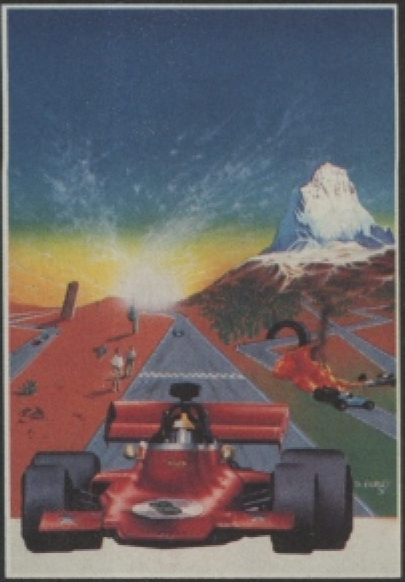
From *Darkness Into Light* is another title planned by CRL, written by ex-Delta 4 member, Judith Childs. A Quilled adventure, it involves the player, taking the role of a woman, in returning a stolen chalice to a church.



Less Kerovnia

After *The Pawn*, and *Guild Of Thieves*, Magnetic Scrolls will be taking a rest from Kerovnian tales. *Assassin* is the working title of their next adventure, set in modern times. *Upon Westminster Bridge*, planned as a text-only adventure, and Anita Sinclair's own pet project, is not likely to see the light of day until about this time next year.

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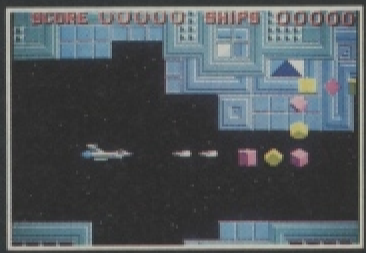
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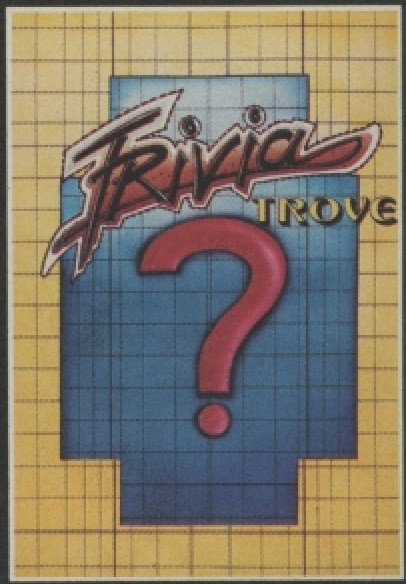




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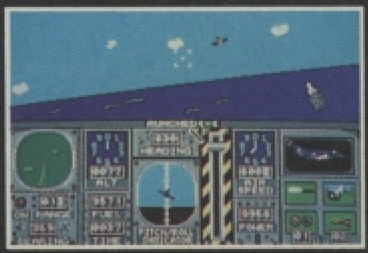
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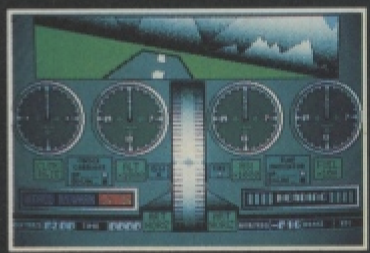


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WIN a Disk Drive

Rainbird Adventures are flying the flag for Britain in the face of stiff competition from the US from the likes of Infocom, Origin, and many others. Titles like *The Pawn* and *Guild of Thieves* have netted a handful of awards for Magnetic Scrolls and Raibird. The range also includes the excellent Level 9 classics *Silicon Dreams, Knight Orc,* and *Jewels of Darkness.*

The whole range of Rainbird adventures are available for the Amiga as well as the Commodore 64.

Now we are giving you the chance to win the complete set of Rainbird adventures — enough puzzles and adventure entertainment to keep you busy right through the winter.

But that is not all we are offering. To enjoy adventure at its best you really need to own a disk drive. So should you be the lucky winner we will throw in a disk drive as well. Amiga owners will receive a voucher to spend on hardware or software to the same value as a Commodore 1541 disk drive.

How To Win

We have devised a short adventurette based on the CU office. Using your adventurer's nouse and knowledge of the CU crew we want you to tell us what the true outcome was to the incident described below. Choose what you think happened from the options numbered one to three and tell us whether you own Amiga or 64. Send these to Rainbird Compo, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.

Don't forget to include your name and address and remember all entries must arrive by December 23 (or at least post marked that date — in view of the Xmas postage backlog).

It's the day before pay day. The CU crew are skint and gasping for a pint. Do they (1) Send Nick Kelly to Tottenham Court tube station to busk the price of a round (2) Empty the extremely full office swear jar or (3) borrow £5 from the extremely well off Advertising Manager of our ad-fat sister publication C+VG.

The City Pride pub is heaving with city gents. Customers are six deep at the bar, there are no vacant seats. The only exit is behind the CU crew — back out through the door. There is an upstairs room with more seats. A fruit machine flashes away in the corner and Mike Pattenden notices that it has nine nudges waiting to be won.

What happens next?

Do the CU crew stay and gamble on the machine in the hope of winning the price of the next round? (2) Find a less crowded pub? or (3) Find some seats upstairs away from the hustle and bustle of the bar?

If you think you know how the CU crew think then get your answers in now. This is a true story and the correct solution is hidden in a sealed envelope in a locked cupboard in the Ed's yuppie flat in Islington.

Here are some clues — the CU crew are lazy, notoriously thirsty and don't agree with the misquotation "neither a gambler nor a lender be".



and the Rainbird Adventure Range

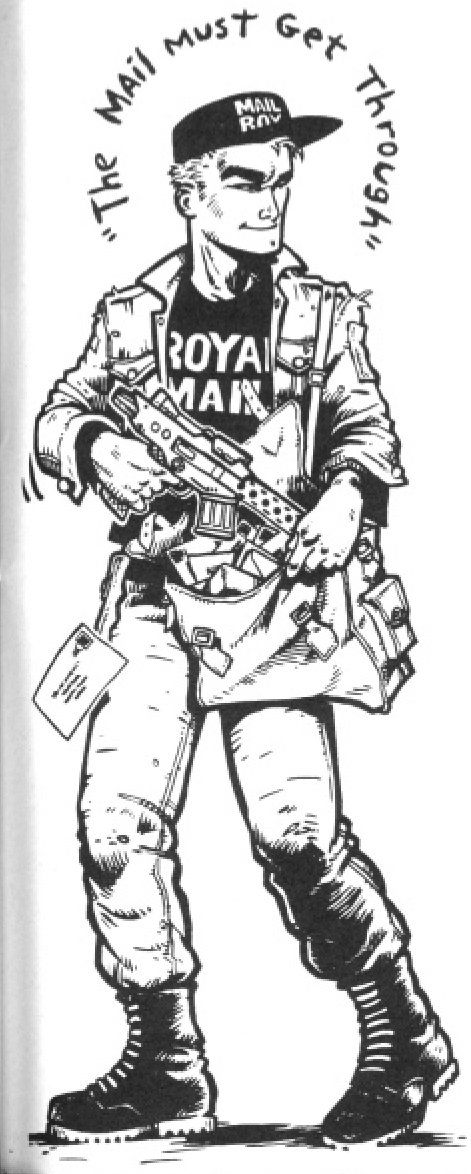

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Softspeaking

After the success of my letter a couple of months back I thought I'd send you some more softspeak.
FREE GAMES TAPE IN NEXT ISSUE!
But the mag'll be 50p dearer
(wrong mag. Ed)
AVAILABLE NOW!
Not in the shops yet
IMAGINE ARE MAKING A COMEBACK!
Again.
WE'VE HAD SOME TEETHING PROBLEMS.
The programmers left.
RESET THE COMPUTER.
Nuke your '64 with a paper-clip,
REVIEW NEXT-ISH.
Next year, maybe.
LEVEL 9 ARE DOING A NEW SECRET PROJECT.
It's an adventure.
WE'VE HAD SOME CASH-FLOW PROBLEMS.
Here come the bailiffs.
THE GAME SOLD WELL AND WE'RE USING THE REVENUE TO DEVELOP NEW IDEAS.
I shall shortly be going on a holiday somewhere nice.
THE GAME DIDN'T SELL AS WELL AS EXPECTED.
I'm going to Bognor.
BACK-UP CART MK37. THE ULTIMATE BACK-UP CARTRIDGE.
Well, apart from the version we're bringing out next month.
CBM 64 FOR SALE. STILL BOXED. UNWANTED BIRTHDAY PRESENT.
I wanted gold-clubs, got a computer, had a row, getting divorced.
SPECTRUM 3+++++
Same junk, different box, higher price.
COMPUTER AND VIDEO GAMES.
And music reviews, film guides, oh and the odd game review, somewhere.
PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED GAME WITH THIS BIG VALUE COMPILATION.
We wouldn't dare release it on its own.
WE'VE STILL GOT TO SORT OUT A FEW BUGS.
Oh my god!!! Heaaaalp!
WE'VE STILL GOT TO SORT OUT SOME BUGS.
Aaaargh! God! We're dead, doomed, sunk.
LEADERBOARD PRO-PLUS-EXECUTIVE PLUS EDITION PLUS.
Ho-hum.
ANDREW BRAYBROOK'S GOT A REVOLUTIONARY NEW GAME CONCEPT.
Bang, Bang, you're dead.
UNBELIEVABLE VALUE COMPILATION.
Unless you bought the four games two months ago at a tenner each.

Simon Kavanagh,
London E9.



Rumbled

I was orrified to see that the vritinks of mi vaforite kolumnitz, Keith Campbell, vos cut to only von pagenik in the October Communist User. And then I buy the new Computer + Socialist Games and to mi amazement, your capitalist advertisment for CU does not even mention this great vriter. Idyotz of the likes of Mike Pattenden, Ferdy Hamilton and Nick Kelly are featured. Efenski Gary Penn, the arch-vally, who you slag down for muntz as being krap, you give the accolade. But the old vaforite of mine, the von ant only Adventure vriter vot has any sense, vor him you do not give the fig. If that ist ow your maganinik is going to be, then sob off — vot more can I say!
D. Sgusted,
Dubrovnik.
Your are Keith Campbell and we claim our pint comrade.

LETTER

Complaint

This is the first time I've written to your magazine and it's to complain about people complaining about complaining. It is our right to complain about anything at all, no matter how ridiculous. People might even write in to complain about me complaining about complaining about complaining, which sounds very complex but just take a deep breath and read it slowly and you'll probably understand it sooner or later

The *Indiana Jones* advert seems to have been made to catch the eye of female readers, Indy's shirt is open the knee of his trousers is ripped and he's swinging his bullwhip around. It's disgusting, it should be banned, disgusting smut like that.

Acknowledgements.
This letter was made possible by the following:
J. Tierney (He's my father) — for giving me the note paper and the envelope.
B. M. Tierney (she's my mother) — for the lend of her pen.

The Post Office — for the stamp, and the CU crew — for printing it.

The contents of this letter are based on fact, any resemblence to fictional people or events are strictly on purpose.
J. Tierney,
Co. Dublin.
This reply was made possible by the letters Ed (who wrote it), the typesetters (who probably spely it wrongly) the printers (who printed it) and your newsagent.

Phewee Huey

I have recently upgraded from a C64 to an Amiga 500 and feel that I must write about your review of *Super Huey* for the Amiga in the October issue.

In the review, Francis Jago stated that the game did not work properly with Kickstart 1.2 and that he needed to use kickstart 1.1. This means that Super Huey can not be used on either the A500 or A2000 models of the Amiga as these machines have Kickstart 1.2 on ROM and cannot use Kickstart 1.1.

I would like to make the following points:
1. Surely your review should have pointed out that A500 users would not be able to use this particular game.
2. Why are US Gold releasing a game *now* which won't run on the A500 (I suspect that the answer to this is that the game was released in America some time ago before the new Amigas were on the market.)
3. Does the packaging for *Super Huey* state that it is for the A1000 only? If not, will retailers be prepared to exchange it for another game if A500 owners buy it?
4. Are there any other games which will not run with Kickstart 1.2? If so, could Commodore User publish a list of them, and are the software companies going to produce new versions that will run on the A500?

The other comments in your review were sufficient to deter me from buying *Super Huey* anyway, but this problem could easily have happened with a *good* game!!

I look forward to further Amiga coverage/reviews in future issues!
Gareth Kitchener,
Hitchin, Herts.
***Super Huey*, US Gold assure us, will load on the A500.**



LETTERS

PCW Show

I thought I would express my delight (not the margarine type) about the 10th year PCW show. It was brilliant, far better than any Commodore show and even better than last year's show, which I thought was not possible.

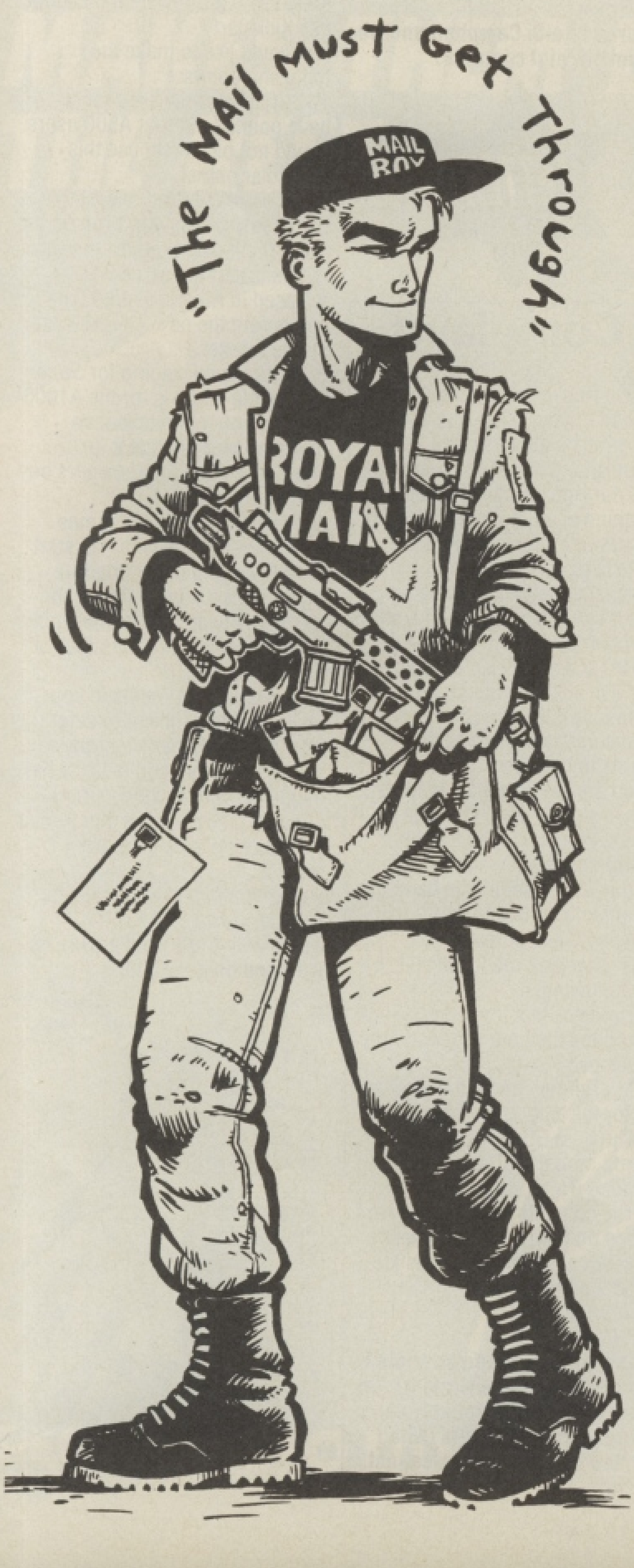
Games were about £6 each. Some, if you could find the right stand were about £3/£4. Each stand gave away posters, some about three, also if you asked they would give you badges. Probable the biggest posters I received were *Bangkok Nights* and the *Rampage* poster (about 4.5 feet tall).

The stands were great, all arcade games were on free play. On the Gremlin stand there was a TV with a gremlin on talking to people. My friend told the gremlin that he was stupid, the gremlin told my friend that he was about to turn into a sausage.

The last stand I went to was the good old C.U. stand. There I meet Eugene Lacey, I had a long chat with him about *Mega Apocalyse* and how good it was. I then bought a C+VG and let him sign it (I didn't buy a C.U. because I have them all). Overall it was a great day. Thanks.

Daniel Lavers
Ashford, Kent

Glad you could make it along with the thousands of others. We had a great time playing everybody else's coin-ops, drinking their booze and enjoying their entertainment. We did some work too, honest.



Offended

I am writing to complain about Virgin's new game *How To Be a Complete Bastard*. I feel the title of this game is very upsetting. I think it is badly named. I therefore think the title should be withdrawn.

M. Birch
Havant, Hants.

The title is based on a book — would you have that withdrawn too? We realise the word has unfortunate connotations but it does seem to have become part of vernacular.

Dull life

I just thought that I would inform you that your mag is cool, especially Arcades. As there are no decent arcades near me I will never have a go on many of the new ones. As you can see my life is boring. The only thing that can liven it up is Commodore User. I get £1.50 a week for pocket money, so I have a careful look through your reviews and at Buzz so I don't pick a bad game.

Right now for something completely different.

1. Thank you Nick Kelly for a brilliant *Afterburner* review and thanks to whoever wrote the *Indiana Jones* preview. I will probably go out and buy it now.
2. Please, please, please can you send me a signed photo of the team?
3. Please add more free photos, tapes and booklets.
4. Please print this letter so I can show off in front of my friends.
5. Please put more competitions into your ace, cool, mega groovy magazine.
6. I'm very polite aren't I
7. Bye.

Dominic Daly
Toddington, Beds.

We're glad we make life worth living. Mike gets the same feeling when faced by a cheese and pickle roll. Now the answers: (1) See Aaargghh! (2) We don't have any group photos — only Mike is of pin-up quality *(who wrote this? Ed)*. (3) You get all we've got. (4) Show off! (5) We have loads. (6) You're a credit to your school your parents and the Model Railway Society of Great Britain. (7) Bye to U2.

Cheek

Did you know that the cover of your May 1987 issue, incidentally drawn by Angus Fieldhouse, also appears on the front cover of the new Games Workshop/Avalon Hill "Rune Quest" Supplement "Land of Ninja"?

Why do two publications have the same cover? Please explain.

Martin Nunn
St Albans, Herts

We can't. What a cheek! But the fact is CU only owns first copyright on the artwork. What Angus does with it afterwards is his business

Aaargghh!

I have recently purchased *Indiana Jones and the Temple Of Doom* from Boots the only computer stockists in our town.

From your preview it sounded quite good, but to my surprise it wasn't that good at all. The graphics were O.K. and the gameplay, but what p@**ed me off was the fact that it was a multi

load! Aaaaargh! God I hate them dam things!

And another thing! After you've been killed you have to rewind it and go through it, again! So this is a kind of warning to the sane British Public, do not buy this game!

Garry Dobson
E. Yorkshire

You should have waited for the final review where the Ed himself pointed out this defect. We've got a disk drive so we don't care.

Do it

I'm writing concerning the coin-op conversion by US "how to ruin another game" Gold of *Out Run*. In particular J. G. Homer's remarks on the subject. Does he own a ZX80 or a Commodore 64? He seems to think just because of the Amiga the C64 is obsolete.

it is quite obvious why US Gold should bother converting it. The 64 *can* do it.

1. Music, though not up to the standard at the coin-op could still be extremely good, expecially if someone like Rob Hubbard does it.
2. Hydraulics. is J. G. Homer serious? I for one got hooked on the stand-up version.
3. Superfast graphics. You just have to look at something like *Super Cycle* to see how fast graphics on the 64 can be. The actual quality of the graphics, though again, not as good as the original, could still be very good.
4. If they do manage to do all this (and there is no reason why they shouldn't be able to) it will probably have to be a multiload. If it is it should use the Dragon Load from *Singe's Castle*, or if they can't manage that it should have some good music in between loads like *The Last Ninja*.

So US Gold take heed!!!!!

David Jenkins
Hatfield, Herts

Get all that Geoff?

Gants Hilliard

After reading your review of *Renegade* in the October issue I felt I must write in and ask a few questions.

1. Gants Hill tube station. You mean the one on the Central Line right near where I live? If you do I don't quite think there are any blood thirsty knife wielding yobs, in fact us Gants Hillians are quite nice people.
2. Mike, do you live in Gants Hill? If so come round one day for a real laugh. Bring the whole team.
3. I never saw you at PCW Mike, why not? Loads of us Gants Hillians were there.

The CU stand was great, I got loads of back numbers and I loved WEC *Le Mans*. Is *Battleships* really dumped? I was really looking forward to getting it. If it is why did you have an ad in the October issue, the issue where you said that it was dumped?

Jai Pushkin
Ilford, Essex

The story was true. MP comes from Goodmayes, Ilford not Gants Hill but he lives there no longer *(phew! MP)*. He *was* at the PCW Show — blagging free drinks at Firebird and Elite most of the time. Battleships (64) is dumped, though 16 bit versions are planned and the 64 version may well turn up on a compilation soon. As for *Ikari* — it's a mystery! Try Hotshots.

Smiths reply

I write in reference to Jose Thomas' letter in your October 1987 issue about Smiths.

I used to work in a W. H. Smiths Software Dept and when this situation cropped up we used to issue a written VAT receipt for the non-faulty game thus solving the problems of two games on one receipt.

I can only assume that the branch he went to were being awkward and suggest he asks them for a VAT receipt next time.

Adam Penn
Luton, Beds

We're just incredibly depressed at their splitting up. No VAT receipt could ever bring Morrissey and Marr back for us.

Punishment

This letter is dedicated to "Mad" Mike Pattenden. In September's Hotshots you asked the readers to suggest a punishment for Nick "Double dealer" Kelly. Everybody knows that the interview with Tony Cottee should have been given to a football expert like you, not to a birdbrain like Kelly.

Here are my suggestions:

1. Chop his head off, and use it as a football.
2. Force him to play Imagine's *Super Soccer*, while you are sitting next to him playing *Californian Games*.

This punishment might not be so original, but it's good enough to make even the toughest beach-bum go bananas.

Can I have the Hotshots special prize now?

Thomas Brekk Unnvik
C. J. Hambros v. 1
Norway

No, the punishment is still too light. I want his whole family destitute, his dog dead, his girlfriend to leave him and the wing to fall off a Jumbo jet and hit him on the head as he breaks all five strings on his guitar. Only then will I be satisfied — MP.

Sound

I am writing to complain about the sound rating given to *ACE II* in your October issue.

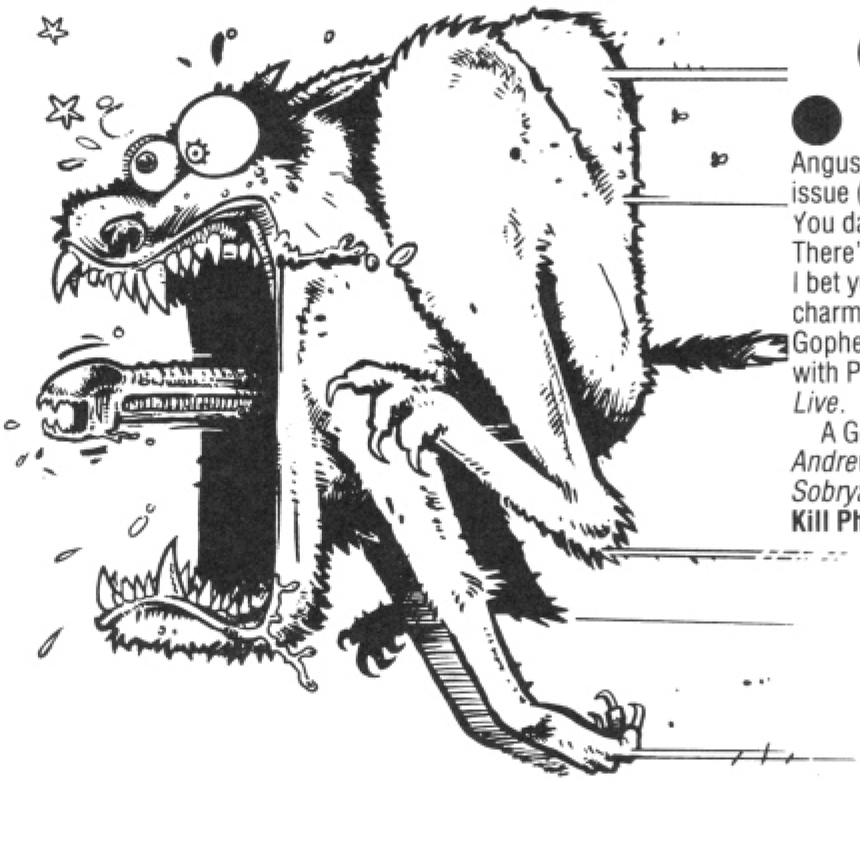
OK, the sound FX might be dull and unrealistic, but surely your reviewer must have noticed the excellent piece of Rob Hubbard music. The music, in my opinion, is one of Rob Hubbard's most exciting and amazing pieces. And it deserves at least 7 or 8 out of 10.

I like the music so much that I have recorded it on audio tape and I listen to it every day on my way to college.

Oh, by the way, have you hears the music from Firebird's *Arcade Classics*? Again, it's by Rob Hubbard, but this piece will make you start head-banging. I'm not joking — Rob Hubbard has made the 64 sound like a heavy metal rock band. Absolutely amazing stuff!!

Fu San Li
Crewe, Cheshire

***Arcade classics* is pretty damn raunchy but we wouldn't listen to it on the way to work. The Ed listens to Bruce Springsteen. Hotshots favours the Smiths (wimp that he is) and Nick Kelly listens to himself all the time. What an egomaniac!**



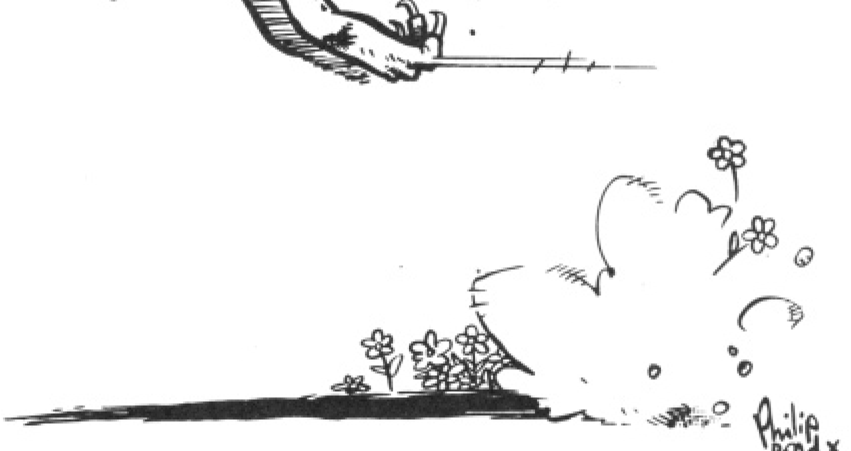
Gopherit

Ref: Wilf Henderson of Angus, Scotland, letter in the last issue (October). Kill the Gopher. You dare. Anyway what gopher? There's no gopher on Roland Rat. I bet your talking about that lovely charming, beautiful, furry little Gopher, Gordon who appears with Philip Schofield on *Going Live*.

A Gordon the Gopher fan.

Andrew "Don't kill the Gopher", Sobryan.

Kill Philip Schofield we say.



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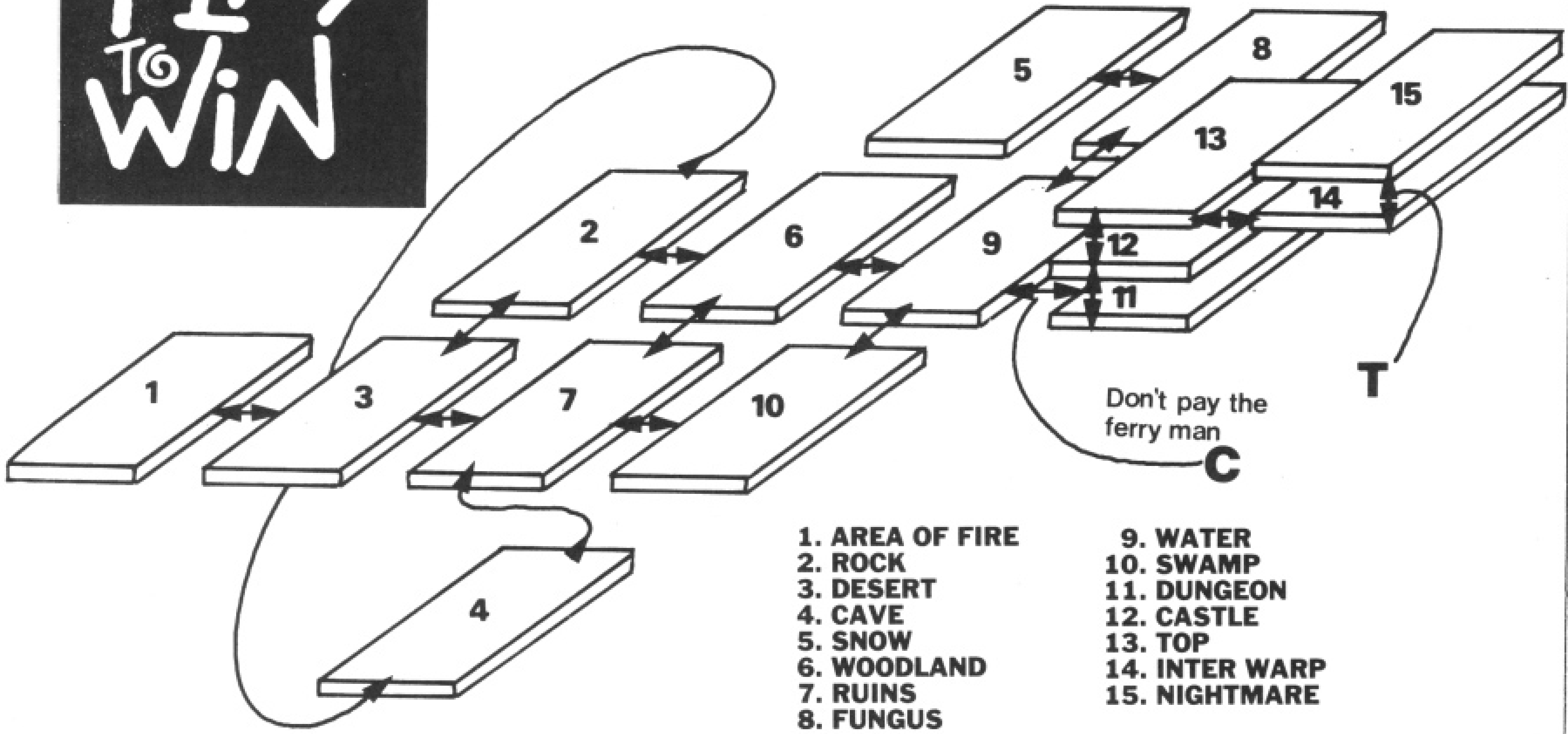
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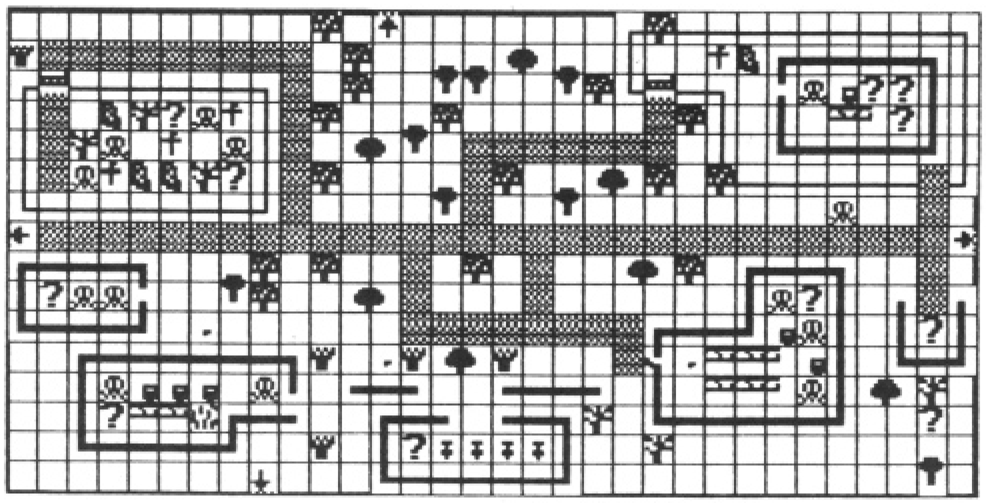
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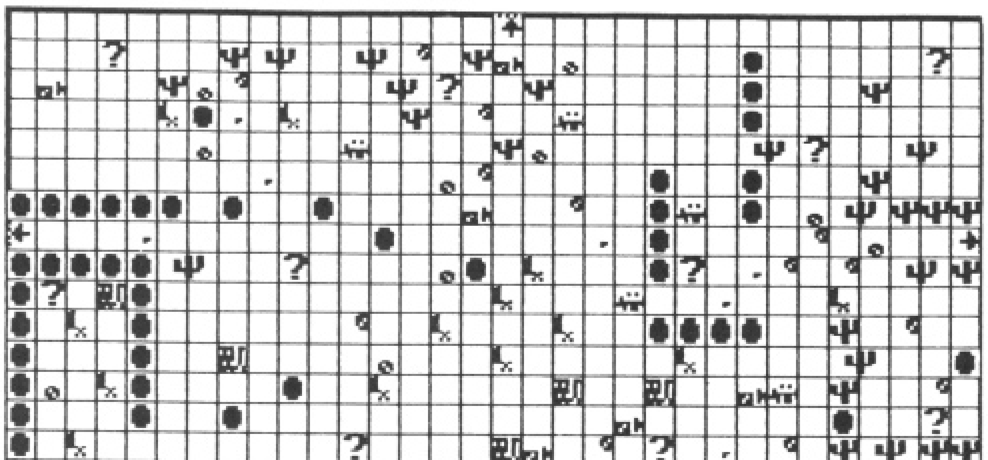


1. AREA OF FIRE
2. ROCK
3. DESERT
4. CAVE
5. SNOW
6. WOODLAND
7. RUINS
8. FUNGUS
9. WATER
10. SWAMP
11. DUNGEON
12. CASTLE
13. TOP
14. INTER WARP
15. NIGHTMARE

DRUID 2
The Enlightenment

Continuing our series of hints and tips with the programmers of the game we asked Tony Beckworth, Firebird's head of games development for his advice on how to play Druid II. A map of all the levels and captions on each should help even the clumsiest of wizards attain enlightenment.





LAND OF RUINS

This is the village of Ishmar from where the game starts. Its best to collect the three keys in the village and the DEATHLAND spell from the south-west.

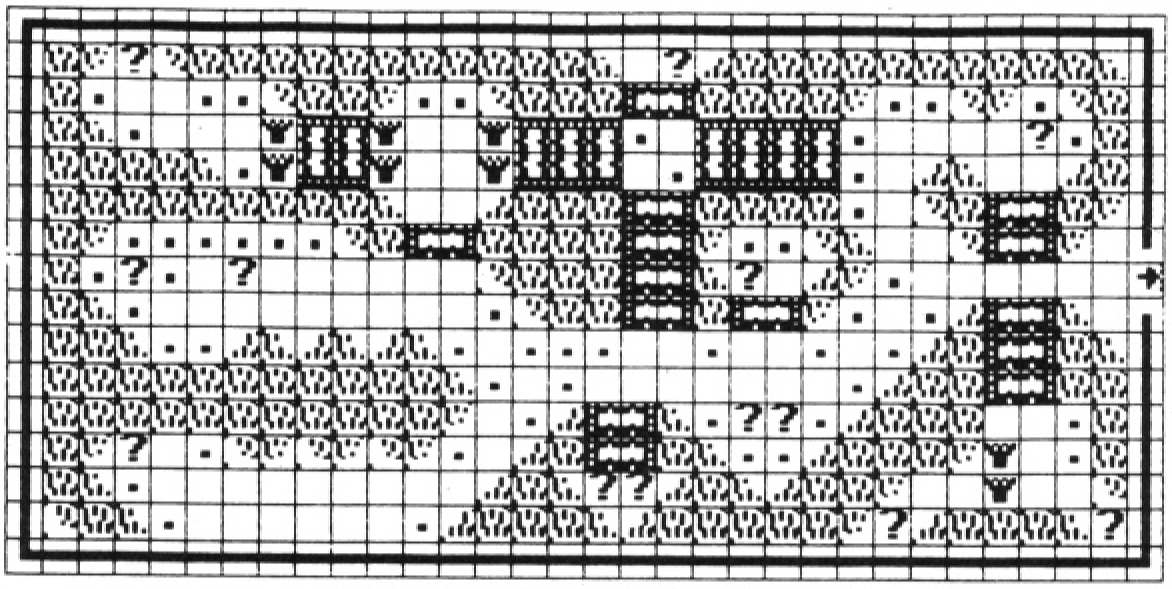
THE DESERT

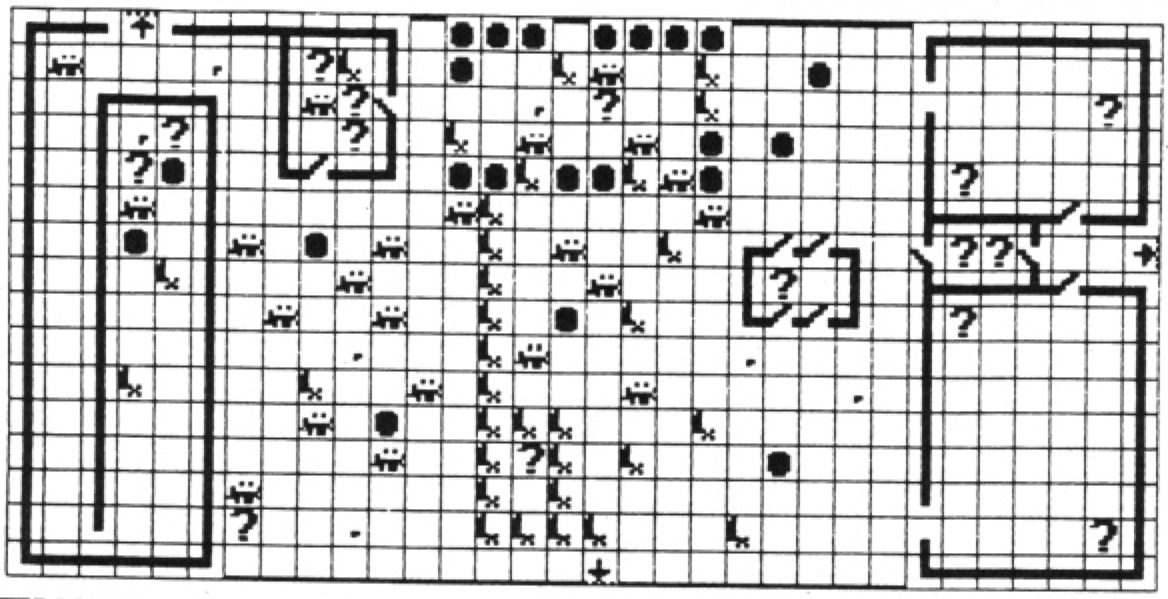
ARMOUR and INVISIBILITY can be found in the north-east. Then destroy the Demon Prince (fire at it and cast DEATHLAND). Move north-far-west and get another DEATHLAND.

PLAY TO WIN

LAND OF FIRE

Two resurrection spells can be found in this land towards the south. Only cast one of them, so that should you die, you will be re-born. But the most important spell of all can be found at the north, guarded by a Demon Prince. Destroy him, and the White Orb is yours.



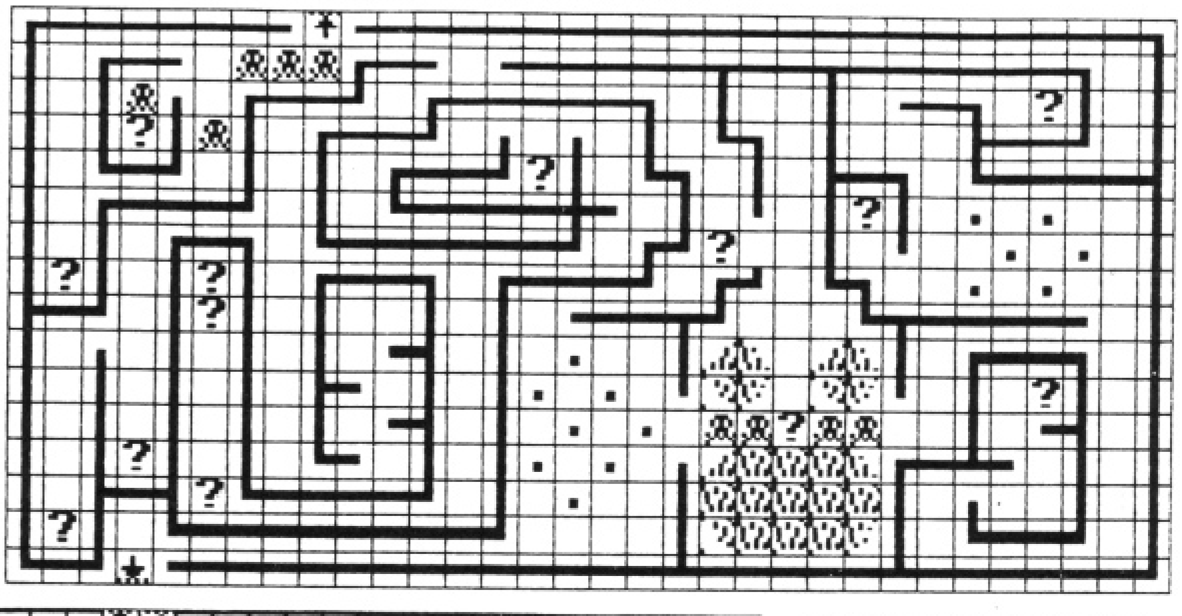


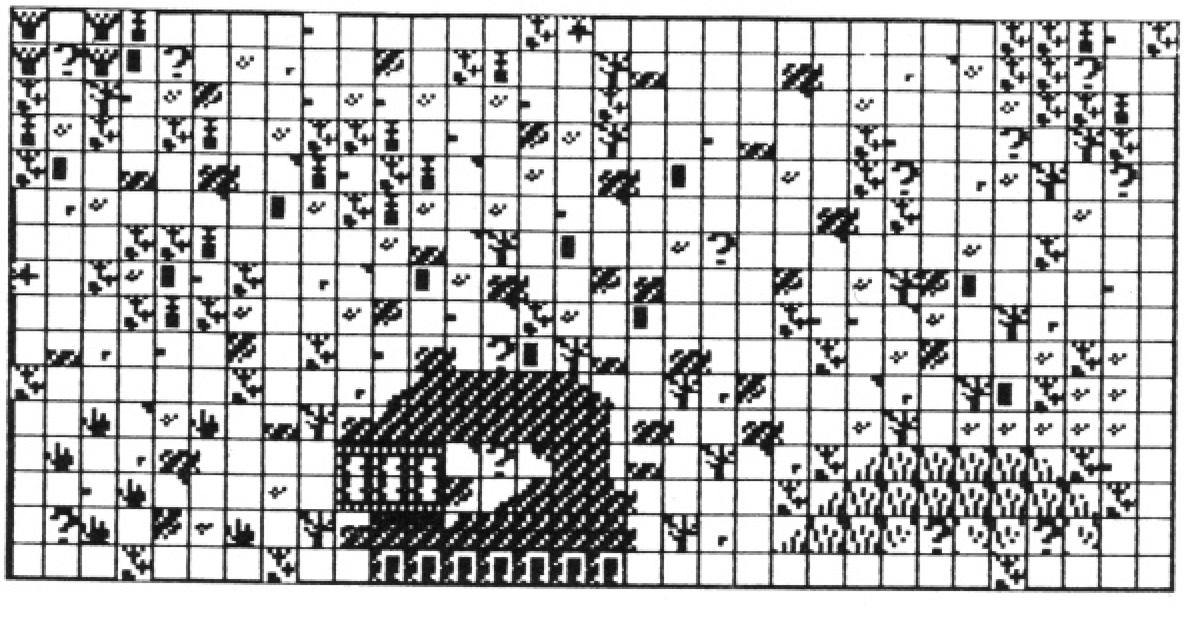
ROCKLANDS

As you enter at the south of this level, get the key to your east, then move to the north-west of the land and get the **CREATE LIGHT** spell. At the far north-west of the land you will find a door leading north. Go through it and you will find yourself in . . .

THE DARK CAVERNS

This level is totally dark so you must cast a **CREATE LIGHT** spell so that you can see your way through the caves. You need the **HORN** spell from within these caverns (you will understand why later!) Through the maze you must find your way to the north of the caves where you will find yourself back at Ishmar. Now you must go east to the Swamp.

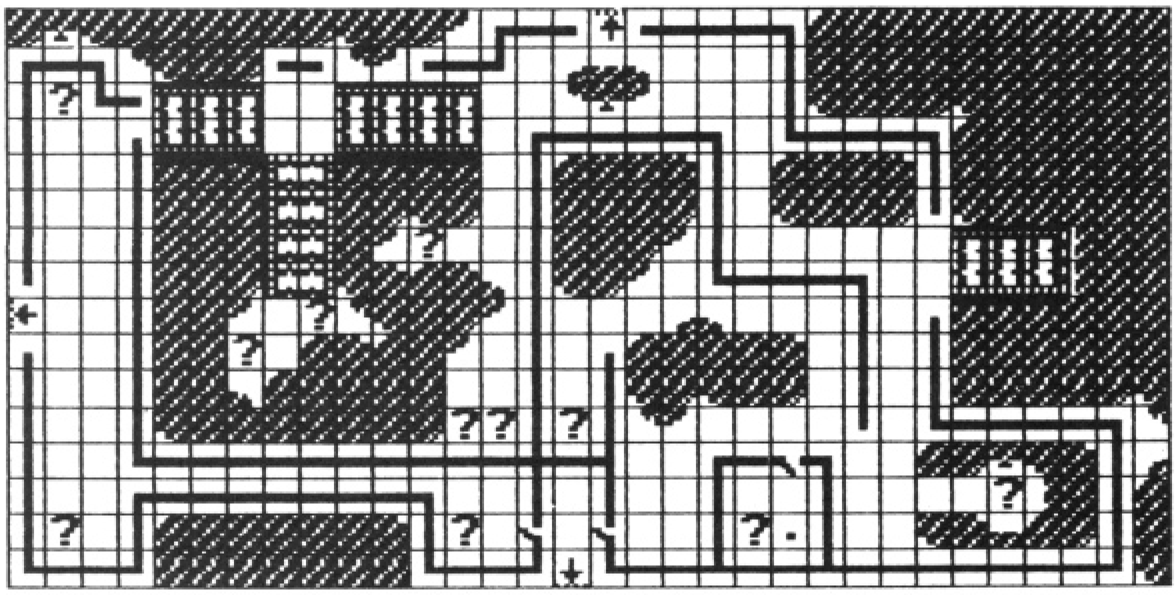




THE SWAMP

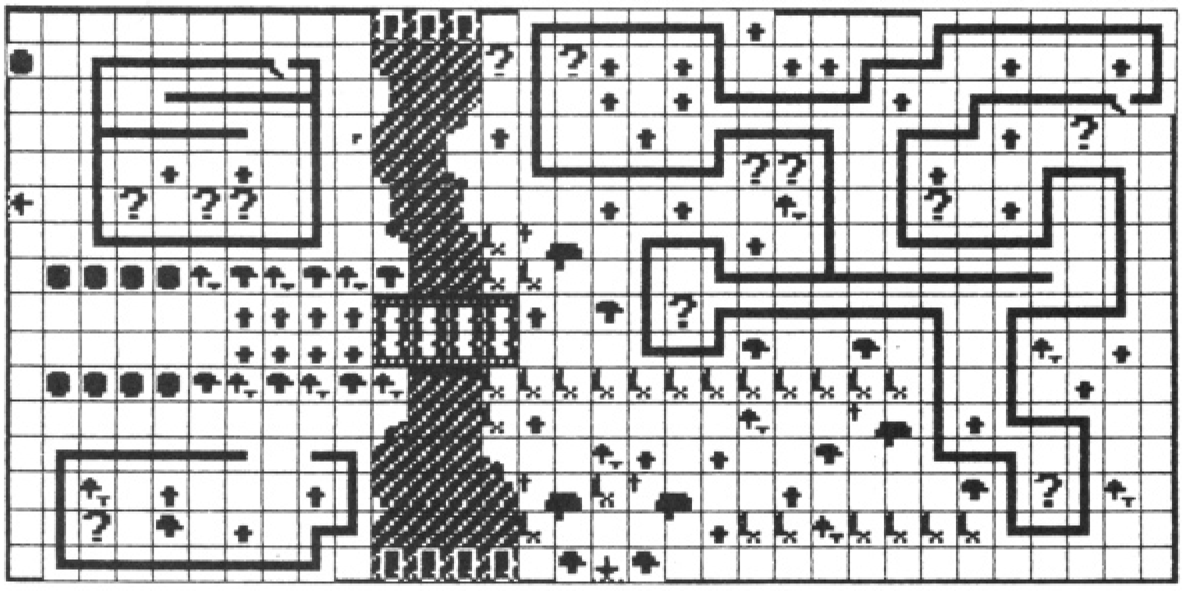
A couple of Kraken elementals can be found on this level to protect you. Now head north into The Land of Water.

- ? SPELL SOURCES
- WATER
- BRIDGE
- A GATE
- SKELETON SOURCES
- TELEPORT PAD
- DOWN STAIRS
- FIRE
- DOORS
- DEAD TREES
- TOADSTOOL SOURCES
- THE HAND SOURCES
- ROBOTS
- UP STAIRS



THE LAND OF WATER

There is a pier to the far-east of this land. Blowing the HORN here will summon the Grim Reaper to take you across to Acamantor's Dark Tower. But first you need money.

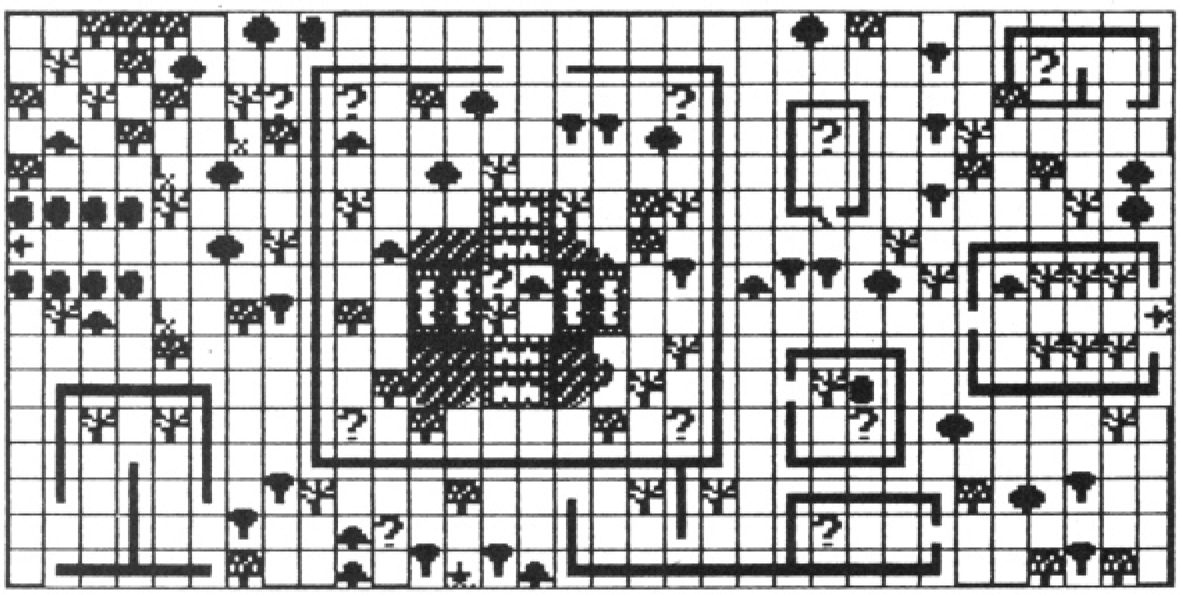


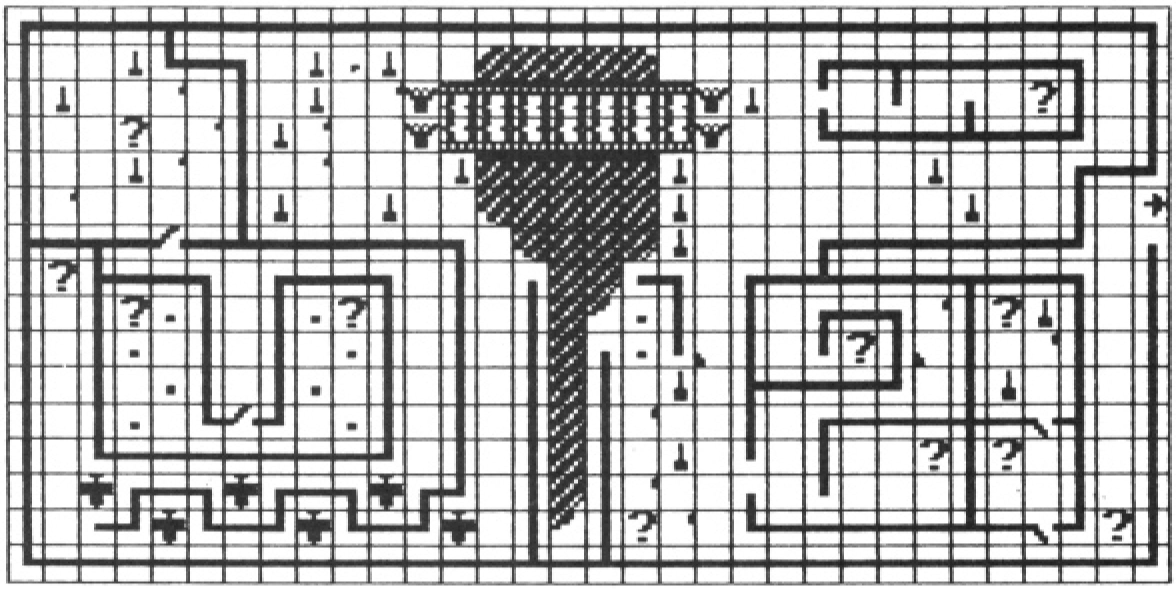
THE LAND OF FUNGUS

Moving mushrooms will poison you. If you are poisoned, then you will have a race against time to find an ANTIDOTE.

THE SNOWLANDS

Go across the northern bridge and fight the Demon Prince then fight past the animated statues until you reach the door that leads to the north-west. Here you will find a COIN which can be used to pay the Grim Reaper, so return to the pier in the land of Water and blow the HORN. You will now be ferried to . . .



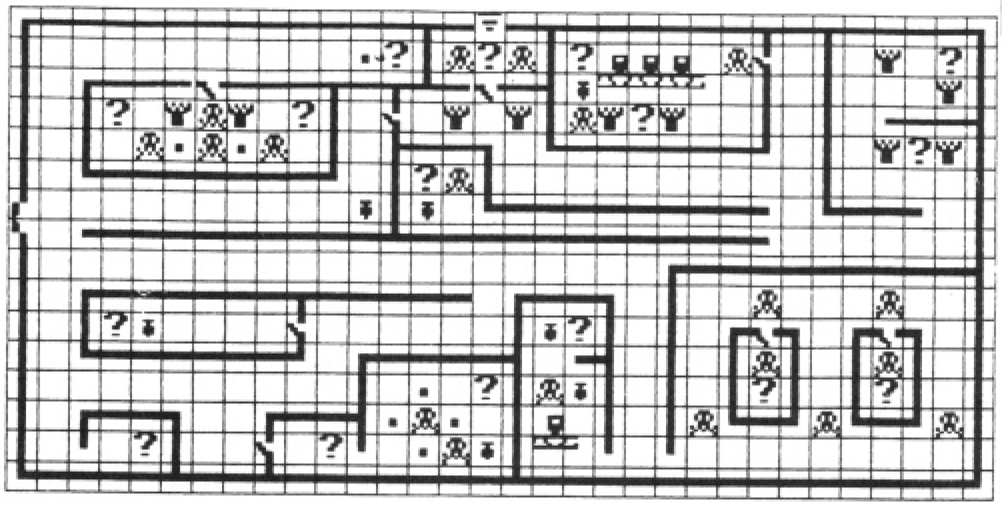


THE WOODLANDS

PLAY TO WIN

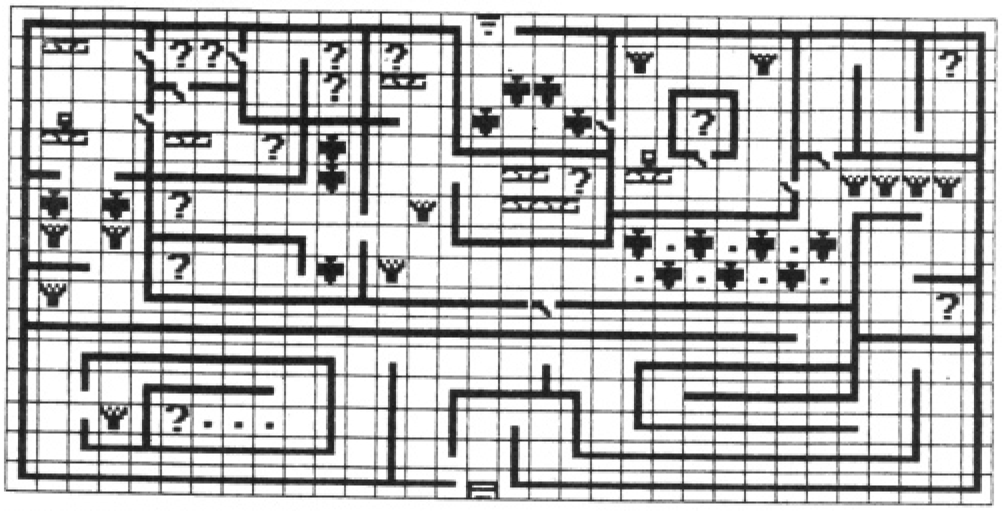
THE LOWER DUNGEON

There's no turning back now! Move North and then East to get a **RESURRECTION** spell. Cast this straight away. Now find your way to the stairs that lead up to the next level of the castle but be careful, because they are guarded by a Demon Prince.



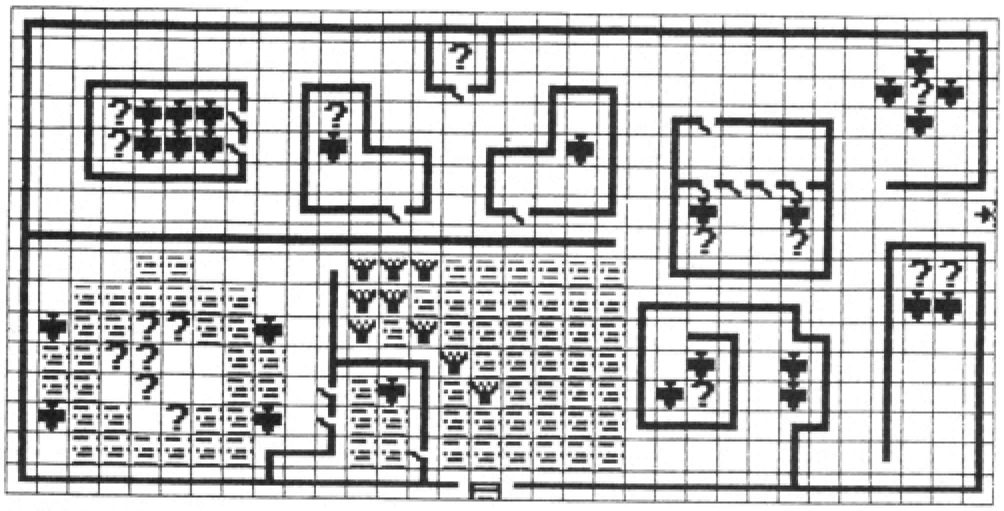
THE CASTLE

Even more animated statues and yet another Demon Prince to fight past. You can't run past this Demon, so you'll definitely need a **DEATHLAND** spell. Carrying on up the castle stairs will lead to . . .



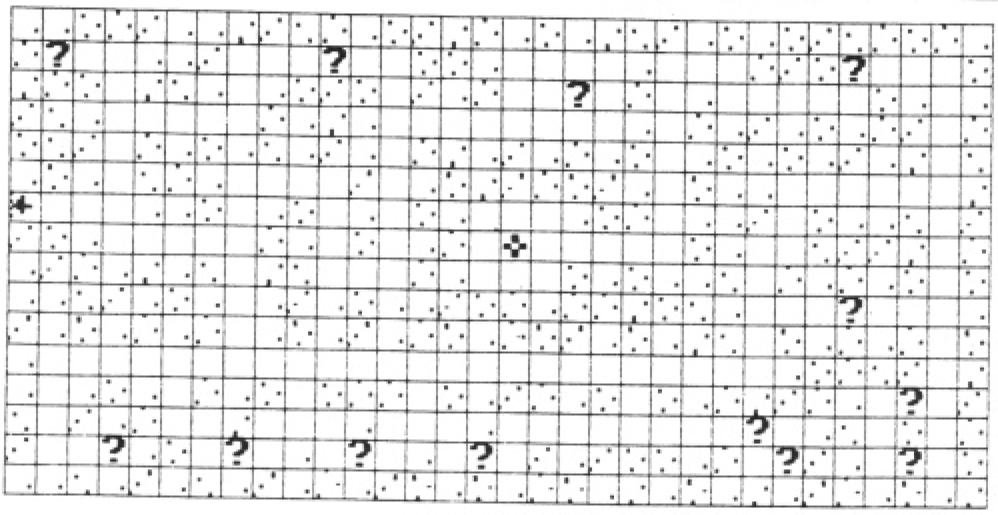
THE TOP OF THE CASTLE

Some of the floors on this level are trapped and will drain your energy. Many keys can be found to the west. A **TELEPORT** spell and a **RESURRECTION** can be found in the room with four doors. When you have them, go east, where you will find a strange door leading out of the side of the castle. But this is the top of the castle.



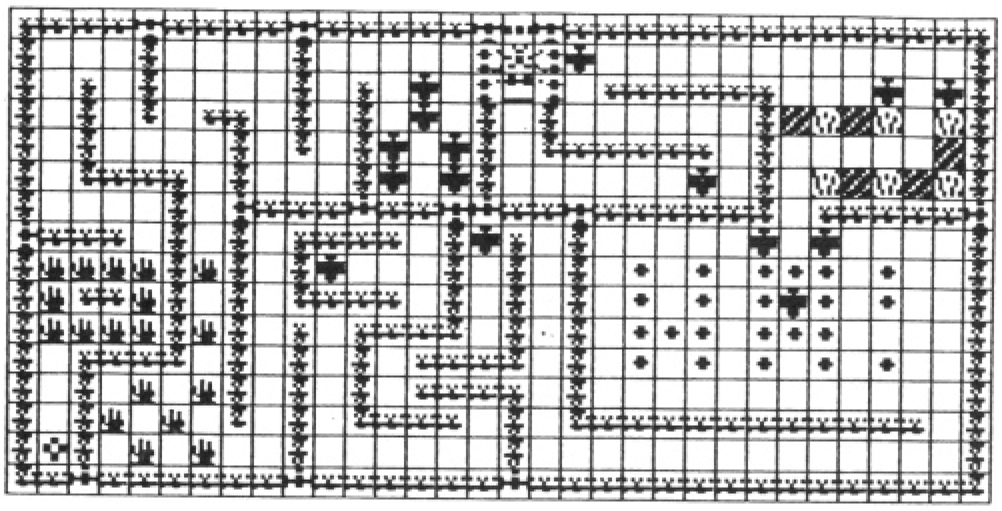
THE INTER WARP LEVEL

You must find your way through this mystic maze but you will find no exits. The only way out is through magic. You must cast your **TELEPORT** spell from the magic symbol at the middle of the maze.



THE FINAL NIGHTMARE

You will find yourself teleported into Acamantor's nightmare world. Here at last you will find the evil that you have come to destroy. But Acamantor's minions will make a final deadly onslaught. Acamantor himself can be destroyed with the **WHITE ORB** spell and your Druid will receive **ENLIGHTENMENT!**



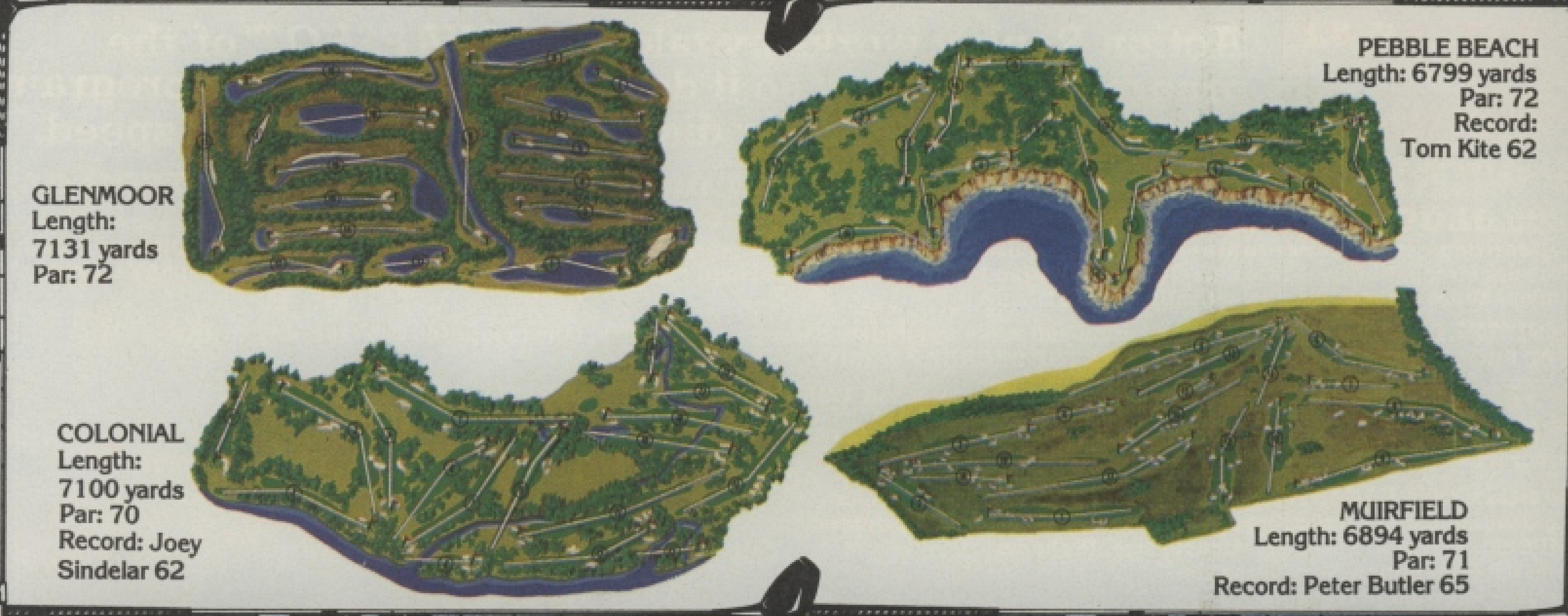
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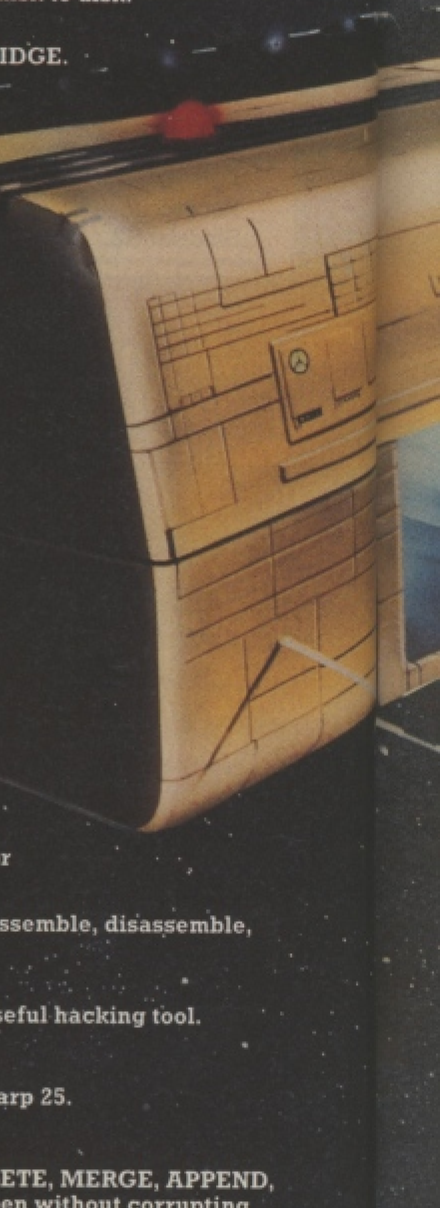
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- **TURBO RELOAD.** All backups will reload at turbo speed, COMPLETELY INDEPENDENTLY OF THE CARTRIDGE.
- **SPRITE KILLER.** Make yourself invincible. Disable sprite collisions – works with many programs.
- **PRINTER DUMP.** Freeze any game and print out the screen. Eg. loading picture, high score screen etc. Works with most printers. MPS 801, 803, Star, Epson etc. Double size, 16 shades, reverse print option. Very versatile – no user knowledge required.
- **PICTURE SAVE.** Save any Hires multicolour screen to disk at the push of a button. Compatible with Blazing Paddles, Koala, Artist 64, Image System etc.
- **SPRITE MONITOR.** Unique Sprite monitors allows you to freeze the action and view all the sprites, watch the sprite animation, save or delete any sprite. Load sprites from one game into another to make customised programs.
- **POKES/CHEAT MODE.** Press the button and enter those pokes for extra lives etc., then restart the program or make a backup. Ideal for custom games.
- **MULTISTAGE TRANSFER.** Even transfers multistage programs from tape to disk. The extra parts fast load – a unique feature. Enhancement disk available for non standard multi-loaders (see below).
- **SUPER COMPACTOR.** Ultra efficient program compaction techniques. Each program saved as a single file. 3 programs per disk side – 6 programs per disk, if you use both sides.
- **TEXT MODIFY.** Change title screens, high score screens etc. Put your own name into a game then restart it or make a backup to tape or disk. Very simple to use.
- **MONITOR.** Full feature 'Floating' type MACHINE CODE MONITOR. All standard features plus many more:- assemble, disassemble, hex dump, interpret, transfer, compare, fill, hunt, number conversion, bank switching, relocate, load/save etc. Uses no memory. Full printer support.
- **DISK MONITOR.** A special monitor for use on the RAM inside your disk drive. All the usual commands – a useful hacking tool.
- **WHOLE DISK COPY.** Copy a full unprotected disk in under two minutes with only one drive.
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- **FAST FORMAT.** Under 20 seconds.
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- **TAPE TURBO.** Designed to make turbo load/save for your own programs. No screen blanking during loading.



REMEMBER all features are built in and available at the touch of a key. All features work with both **TAPE** and **DISK.** (Except multipart transfer & disk file utility).

ENHANCEMENT DISK

Contains routines for transferring many of the non-standard multi-load games from tape to disk. Over 40 titles. Latest additions are **LAST NINJA, ROAD RUNNER** (infinitive lives option), **BLOOD 'N' GUTS** (play any event), **DECEPTOR, LEADERBOARD EXEC** and **WORLD CLASS, KILLED UNTIL DEAD, MASK, INDIANA JONES, IMPLOSION, TAIPAN,** plus all the classics including **SUMMER GAMES, WORLD GAMES, DRAGONS LAIR** 1 and 2, **GAUNTLET, SUPERCYCLE** etc. Works in conjunction with **ACTION REPLAY.**

Disk includes **GRAPHIC SLIDESHOW** for displaying pictures saved with **ACTION REPLAY.** Plus Warp 25, Superboot – non Action Replay owners can speed up their 'expert' or 'freeze machine' programs to see what they have been missing.

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Y MK IV HAS ARRIVED!

FOR CBM64/128

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● **EXTENDED MONITOR.** The 'Professional' has an extra powerful machine code monitor. Because it has both ROM and RAM at its disposal the Professional can freeze any program and then examine the WHOLE OF COMPUTER MEMORY in its frozen state including screen RAM, ZERO PAGE and STACK.

Full feature disassembly, compare, fill, transfer, hunt, relocate, jump etc. etc. In fact all the features of the best fully blown monitor available. Return to the frozen program at the press of a key at the point you left it! An absolute must for the program hacker – or even the programmer who needs to de-bug his program.

● **INTELLIGENT HARDWARE.** The Professional hardware is unmatched anywhere in the world today. The special logic processing chip can cope with protection methods as they appear by reacting to its environment.

MK IV PROFESSIONAL ONLY £34·99 POST FREE

WARP 25 Reloads an average BACK-UP in 6 Seconds!!

UPGRADE INFORMATION

MK III TO MK IV. Just send £9.99 and we will send you the new MK IV Chip to plug into your cartridge. Fitting is very easy.

MK III TO MK IV 'PROFESSIONAL'. Send your old cartridge plus £19.99 and we will send you a new Professional MK IV.

MK 2 Action Replay owners can get £10 as part exchange against either the MK IV or Professional. Send old cartridge plus balance.

PERFORMANCE PROMISE

Action Replay will backup any program that any other cartridge can backup – and more! It also has an unmatched range of onboard features. Before you buy check our competitors ads to see what they offer and see how many of the Action Replay MK IV features are either not there or have to be loaded from Supergate disks etc. When you buy Action Replay if you don't find our claims to be true then return it within 14 days for a full refund.

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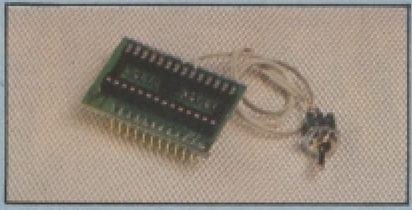
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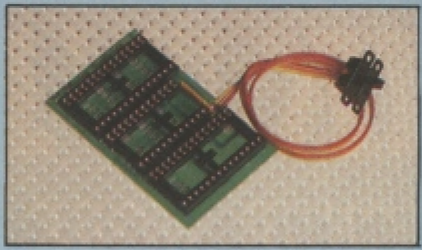




4 WAY KERNAL BOARD

- This board fits in place of the kernal in your 64 and accepts a 16K or 32K replacement kernal giving 2 or 4 different operating systems.
- Just flick the switch supplied to select between systems.
- This is a carrier only – ready to accept your own chip.
- Now you can have all your different systems available at one time.
- Full instructions. ❑ Fitted in minutes.

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- A multi carrier board accepts up to 3 chips.
- Fits in place of original kernal of 64.
- Three sockets – one for the original kernal plus two others each accepting a 16K chip – that's 5 operating systems available at the flick of a switch!
- Fitted in minutes.
- Full instructions.

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RESET CARTRIDGE

- Unstoppable reset button.
- Resets even so called "unstoppable" programs.
- Add pokes from magazines etc.
- Fits in cartridge port.
- Simply plug in.

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- Top quality fast action.
- Top & trigger fire buttons.
- Rapid fire/auto action.
- Suction feet for one handed action.
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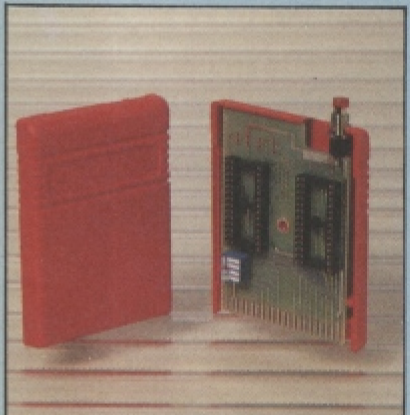
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- What gives Burst Nibbler its power? Conventional nibblers have to decode the data from the disk before it can transfer it using the serial bus – when non standard data is encountered they are beat. Burst Nibbler transfers data as raw GCR code via the parallel cable without the need to decode it so you get a perfect copy of the original.

● Will nibble upto 41 tracks. ● Copy a whole disk in under 2 minutes. ● Full instructions.
● Regular updates – we always ship the latest. ● Fitted in minutes – no soldering usually required.
● Full or ½ tracks. ● No need to buy parallel cable if you have Disk Demon/Dolphin etc.
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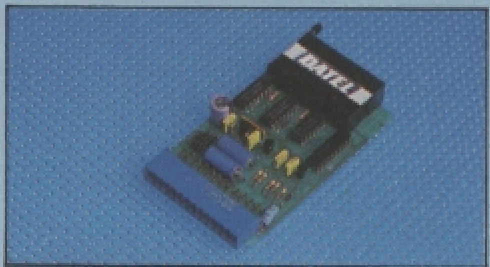
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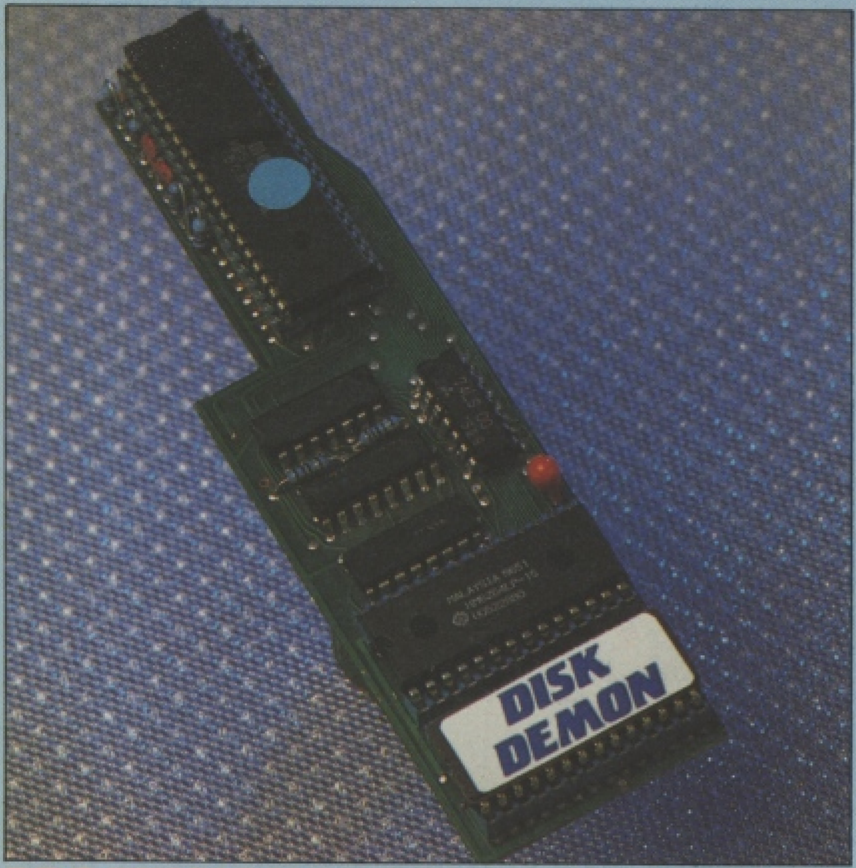


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£64.99 POST FREE with Disc Demon operating system

"The world's fastest parallel operating system"

- ❑ Loads a typical 202 block program file in under 3 seconds!
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- ❑ 20x faster save (PRG files).
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PLUS AN ADVANCED COMMAND STRUCTURE INCLUDING:

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- ❑ 16 function keys: list, run, load, directory, format, save, old, verify, etc.
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- ❑ Unique built in file copier will copy files up to 250 blocks like lightning – multiple copy options – perfect for copying Action Replay files.
- ❑ Highly compatible with commercial software – can be switched out for non compatible programs.
- ❑ Perfect for use with Action Replay 3 – a typical AR3 backup will reload in about 3 seconds – yes 3 seconds!
- ❑ Speeds up other DOS functions including verify, scratch etc.
- ❑ Comes complete with superfast file and whole disk copier free!
- ❑ Screen on or off during loading.
- ❑ Enhanced command set – over 30 new commands.
- ❑ Easily fitted – Disk Demon plugs inside the 1541 and the new operating system chip plugs inside the C64/128. Fitting takes only minutes and usually requires no soldering.
- ❑ User port throughbus supplied free – you could pay £15.00 for this alone.
- ❑ Supplied complete – no more to buy.
- ❑ Works on C128/1541 in 64 or 128 mode.

C128 version £69.99

FAST HACK'EM ™

The Ultimate Disk Copier/Nibbler for C64/128

❑ MULTI-MODULE SYSTEM – ALL ON ONE DISK

❑ SINGLE 1541 MODULE

- ● AUTO NIBBLER: Copy an entire protected disk in 3 minutes. Automatically senses type of protection and treats it as normal data to produce working copy.
- ● NIBBLER: Copy an entire disk in 2 minutes. As above but parameters can be set manually.
- ● FAST COPY: Copy a disk in under 2 minutes.
- ● FILE COPY: Copy and file in 9 seconds.
- ● FAT TRACKER: Fat tracks are amongst the latest forms of protection. This mode allows you to produce a fat track on the disk.

❑ SINGLE 1571 DRIVE (64 OR 128 MODE)

- ● FAST COPY: Entire 1571 disk in under 1 minute.
- ● SINGLE OR BOTH SIDES: Will copy C64 or true 128 software.
- ● C64 or 12 modes.

❑ 1541 PARAMETERS MODULE

This is the module that gives Fast Hack'em its power. The parameters module contains dozens of "Parameter Keys" that are used to unlock those heavily protected programs. Each parameter is designed for a particular software brand or even a particular program. Other copy programs may make strong claims, but without special parameters they just can't cope. Datel will be offering updates to Fast Hack'em on a quarterly basis, featuring 20-50 new parameters plus other improvements as they're made. Prices to be £6 plus old disk.

❑ 1541 PARAMETERS MODULE

- ● AUTO NIBBLER: Copy an entire unprotected disk in under 1 minute. Features auto track/sector analyzer.
- ● FAST COPY: Copy entire disk in 36 seconds with verify.
- ● AUTOMATIC FASTCOPY: As above but with completely automatic operation. In fact once set up doesn't even need the computer. A must for duplicating disks on a large scale.

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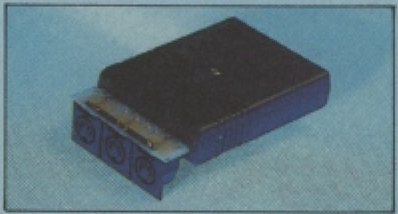
DISKMATE II

The Disk Utility Cartridge

- ❑ Disk fastload cartridge.
- ❑ Up to 5 times faster.
- ❑ Fast save. ❑ Fast format (10 secs).
- ❑ Improved DOS – single stroke commands – load/save/dir/old etc.
- ❑ Redefined function keys for fast operation of common commands.
- ❑ Powerful toolkit commands including: old/delete/merge/copy/append/autonum/linesave etc.
- ❑ Plus a full machine code monitor – too many features to list but it has them all!
- ❑ Special switching techniques make Diskmate invisible to the system. Therefore it is a more compatible fastloader than other types.
- ❑ Diskmate II is £14.99.

Special Offer!!

Diskmate II can be purchased on the same cartridge as Action Replay III for **ONLY £39.99**



MIDI 64

A Full Midi Interface for the 64/128 at a realistic price

- ❑ MIDI in. ❑ MIDI thru. ❑ 2 x MIDI out.
- ❑ Compatible with most leading software packages including: Seil, JMS, Advanced Music System, Joreth, Steinburg etc.

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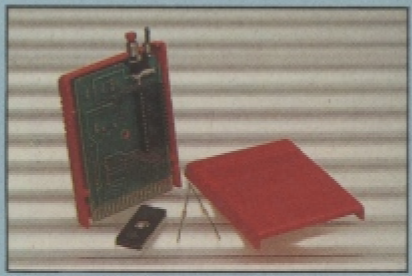
MOUSE

- ❑ CBM 64/128 mouse.
- ❑ Wide compatibility with software including: Blazing Paddles.
- ❑ Works by mimicking joystick so will work in any joystick application including graphic packages only designed for joystick.
- ❑ Functions on either joystick port.
- ❑ Optical system operation.

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CHIPS

- ❑ 27128 **£3.00 EACH**
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CARTRIDGE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

- ❑ All the necessary parts to produce an 8K/16K auto-start cartridge.
- ❑ Top quality PCB. ❑ Injection moulded case.
- ❑ Reset switch. ❑ 16K EPROM.
- ❑ "Cartridge Handbook" gives full details and tips on building and configuring the cartridge for many uses.

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complete with handbook

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PLAY TO WIN

HYSTERIA

This program provides you with unlimited energy and allows you to collect to enter the number of pieces that you need to complete each level.

```
0 REM ** BY D.SLACK **
1 FOR X=336 TO 380
2 READ B:POKEX,B:C=C+
B:NEXT
3 IF C=4352 THEN 5
4 PRINT"DATA ERROR":END
5 PRINT"DO YOU WANT
UNLIMITED ENERGY Y/N?"
6 GET T$:IF T$="Y" THEN
POKE369,96:GOTO 9
7 IF T$="N" THEN 9
8 GOTO 6
9 PRINT:PRINT"ENTER THE
NUMBER OF PIECES TO
COLLECT"
10 PRINT"PRESS KEY 1/2/3/4/5"
11 GET N:IF N<1 OR N>5 THEN
11
12 POKE374,N*2
13 SYS336
14 DATA 32,44,247,32,108,
245,169,99
15 DATA 141,134,9,169,1,141,
135,9
16 DATA 76,16,8,169,112,141,
216,7
17 DATA 169,1,141,217,7,76,
0,7
18 DATA 169,144,141,204,14,
169,10,141
19 DATA 183,15,76,0,8
```

Now run the program and the game will load and run.

David Slack

HYSTERIA

Another way to make the game easier is to enter some of these words into the high score table. After you have entered one of them a different message will appear in the score table and you will have extra weapons.

Enter in high scores/Extra Weapons:

Cannings Guardian force, laser arrows; **Sound n Vision** Guardian force, jetpack, laser arrows; **Tony Barstool** Electric bolas, jetpack, laser arrows; **Please Crash** Electric bolas, jetpack, laser eyes; **The CBM Amiga** Laser eyes; **Joffa Smiff** Laser eyes (slow down energy loss at end of level); **Slartibartfarst** Laser eyes; **Stevey Big Nose** Laser arrows, jetpack, electric bolas; **Joe Kiss A Gram** Laser eye.

David Slack

BUBBLE BOBBLE

This small program will give the player infinite lives

```
10 REM ANDY GRIFO
20 FOR A=53216 TO A+
39:READ B:POKE A,B:NEXT
30 SYS 53216
40 DATA 32,44,247,32,108,245,
169,243
50 DATA 162,207,141,134,9,
142,135,9
60 DATA 76,16,8,169,0,162,
208,141
70 DATA 63,1,142,64,1,76,21,1
80 DATA 169,189,141,214,4,76,
96,68
```

A. Grifo

FREDDY HARDEST

The code to play side of the game is 25425

Ronnie Farrington
Birkenhead

AMIGA KARATE

All instructions are inside the program.

```
10 REM (c) Andy Grifo.
20 REM First Make a Backup of
the AMIGA KARATE disk
30 REM Now RENAME (the Copy)
the YELLOW TRIANGLE icon
40 REM to KARATE and also
RENAME the FIST icon to
50 REM HACKED (do this with the
RENAME option from
60 REM the WorkBench). Now
Boot Up AMIGA BASIC and
70 REM type in this program and
if you're clever you'll
80 REM SAVE it to a Blank disk
for future use. . . .
90 *REM —— Finished On
30/10/87 at 19:54 ——
100 REM Watch This Space for
More AMIGA Hacks.
110 PRINT "Hang on a mo."
120 OPEN "R",#1,"KARATE:
HACKED",1
130 FIELD#1,1 AS N$
140 FOR A=26078 TO
26104:READ B:RSET N$=
CHR$(B)
150 PUT#1,A:NEXT
160 INPUT "Hello Old Chap, How
Many Men Would You Like (3-
90)";M
170 IF M>91 THEN PRINT "A
GURU IS AFTER YOU MY DEAR
FRIEND . . .":STOP
180 RSET N$=
CHR$(M):PUT#1,A-579
190 PRINT "Fingers At The
Ready, Now Give Me a
Boot":STOP
200 DATA 72,65,67,75,32,66,
89,32
210 DATA 65,78,68,89,32,71,
82,73,70
220 DATA 7,32,70,79,82,32,89,
79,85
```

Andy Grifo

JACK THE NIPPER II

The following listing will give infinite lives one JACK THE NIPPER II.

```
10 REM JACK II HACK BY G.
HOLDHAM
20 PRINT CHR$(147)
30 FOR F=256 TO 296:READ
A:POKE F,A:NEXT
40 SYS 256
50 DATA 32,44,247,32,108,
245,169
60 DATA 19,141,134,9,169,1,
141,135
70 DATA 9,76,16,8,169,32,
141,114
80 DATA 6,169,1,141,115,6,
76,0,6
90 DATA 169,238,141,170,
199,76
100 DATA 16,128,0
```

Gareth Holdham
Cardiff

POKES

GAMES FOR '88

ARC



Tokyo's JAMMA Show (Japanese Amusement Machinery Manufacturers' Association) is probably the most important arcade exhibition in the world. The Japanese have consistently pushed the frontiers of gaming technology forward. Ten years ago it was Space Invaders, then they introduced simulators, sit-in cabinets and laser discs. Each innovation was unveiled at the JAMMA to a rapturous reception. We sent an astonished and jet-lagged Mike Pattenden to the 25th exhibition with a fistful of Yen, a plane ticket and a change of socks with the instruction 'bring us the word on the new wave of coin-ops.' Here's the story . . .

I finally cracked it! After years of chewing toasties on the Brummie express and having coffee slopped all over me on the way back from the buffet car I finally cracked it. This one made up for all those humdrum previews that working for CU normally entails. Mind you, after 14 hours on a 747 and a two hour bus ride through Tokyo's rush hour, a ninety minute trip on a 125 sounds like heaven—even if you do end up in Birmingham. There again you don't get to see Alaska on the way to US Gold.

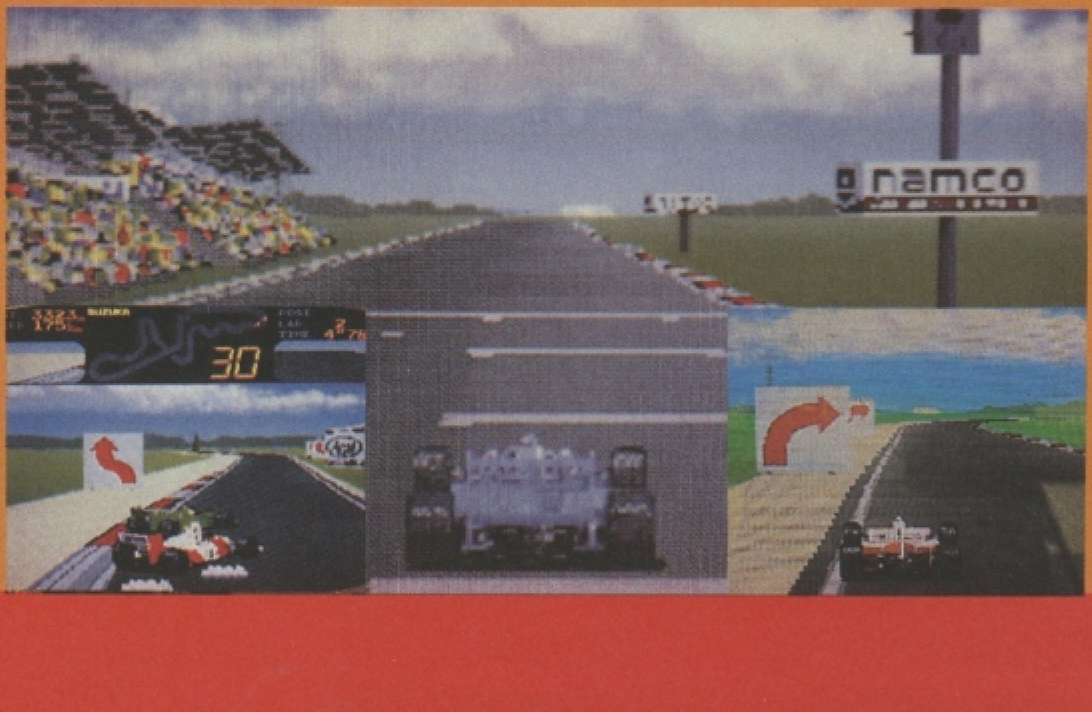
Entering Tokyo at night through its expressways (large multi-laned



FINAL LAP

It was Namco's *Pole Position* which led the way for grand prix arcade games. Their latest, *Final Lap,* makes it look prehistoric. Whilst you can't expect the kind of eight machine link-up I saw, *Final Lap* makes a challenging game on its own. The graphics are in the same class as *Out Run* and *WEC* with great attention to detail on the cars so that they closely resemble the Mclarens and Williams of the Formula One cars. There's much more detail on the course as well with grandstands and scenery based on the Suzuka circuit Mansell crashed on in practice to lose a chance of the World Championship. He could do a lot worse than practice on this, it's going to be big.





ADES

GAMES FOR '88



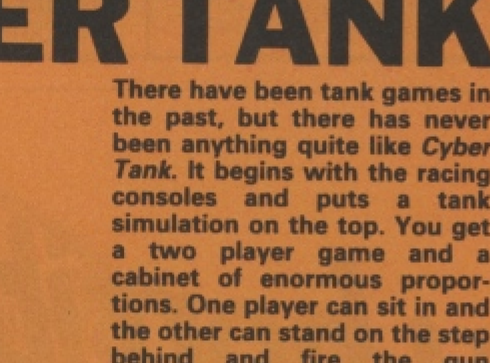




CYBER TANK

There have been tank games in the past, but there has never been anything quite like *Cyber Tank*. It begins with the racing consoles and puts a tank simulation on the top. You get a two player game and a cabinet of enormous proportions. One player can sit in and the other can stand on the step behind and fire the gun mounted in front of the screen Operation Wolf-style. The screen view also follows recent developments two sceens having been joined together for a wide-angle view of the streets your tank rumbles along. Gameplay is average however because it lacks the frenetic pace of something like *Operation Wolf* and the graphics are a bit murky. Could be a white elephant, but might succeed on novelty value.





flyovers) is akin to a scene from 'Bladerunner' with its teeming streets, neon signs and traffic jams. The lights may go off during the day but little else changes. Tokyo is a city of some 12 million people and most of them seem to have a car. If you want to go somewhere you don't jump in a cab. With an average speed of 9 km an hour you just wouldn't get there. In Tokyo City you let the train take the strain.

And so it was on the second day with a less than hearty breakfast inside me (a cup of coffee, a hard-boiled egg and a piece of inch thick toast) I jumped on the underground and went exploring the varied districts of Tokyo. A couple of stops later I was in the equivalent of the West End and, with an unerring sense of direction, standing before a huge amusement arcade.

The first thing that strikes you about Japanese arcades is the seated punters. Apart from sit-in cabinets and special consoles the Japanese like a seat while they blast through their favourite shoot'em up. So their arcades are filled with those little 'cocktail' cabinets you occasionally see in pubs. Games cost 100 Yen a go—about 40 pence which may seem a touch expensive until you realise Tokyo is the most expensive city in the world. You can easily spend thirty quid on a decent meal and I did *(aaaaarrggghhh!! Expenses Ed)*. A tour round several other arcades proved this to be the norm, but failed to yield any stunning games that had never crossed over to the West. I did spy a Stallone-licensed *Rocky* boxing game that I hadn't seen before and more interestingly a 3D game called

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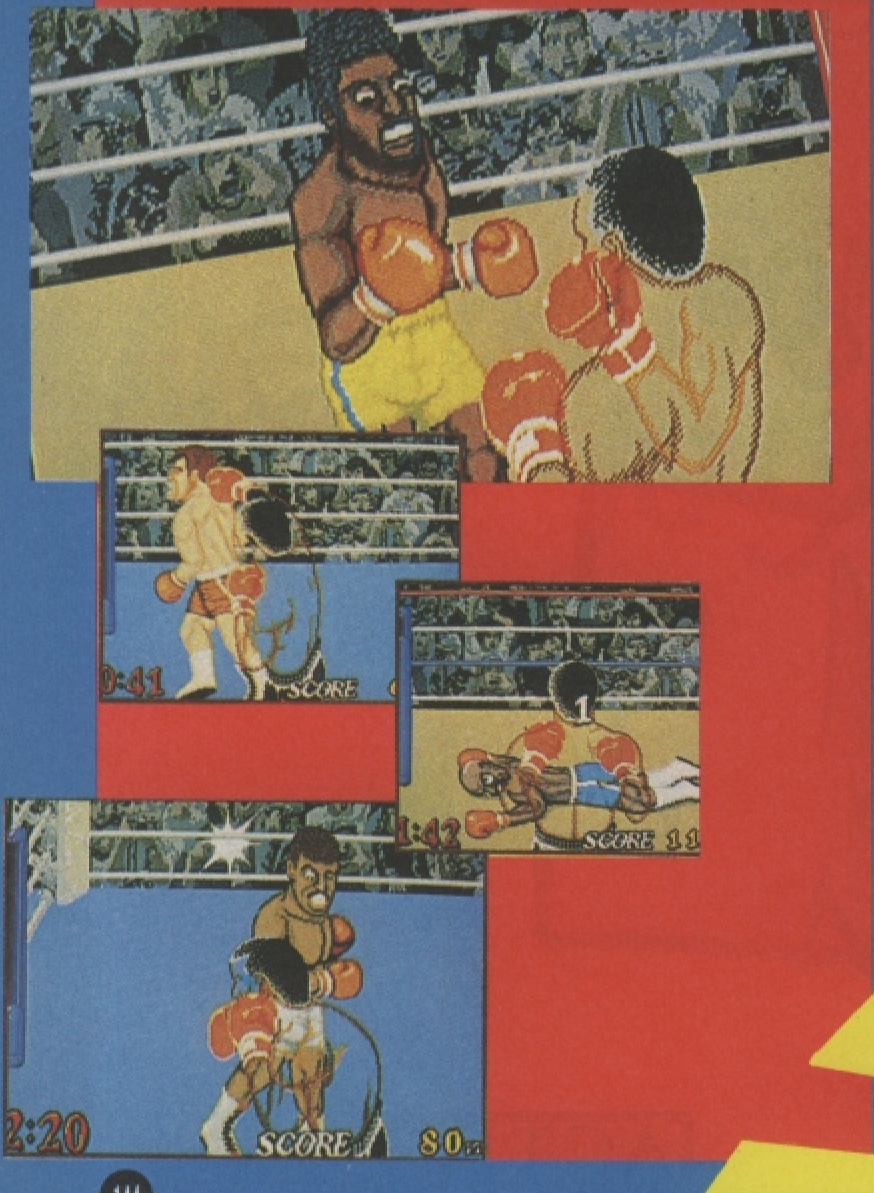
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Thunder Ceptor II. Housed in a console it had a fixed pair of those wacky blue and green glasses they issue with gimmicky films and magazines. The effect was startling as you flew a ship down a long Hyperway which actually seemed to disappear over your head. The graphics and gameplay didn't really do it justice, but my appetite was well and truly whetted for two days freeplay on some stunning new machines.

Another thing that struck me about many of the Japanese arcades was how quiet many of them are,

HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP

If you're a wimp then you're going to have a bit of trouble with *Heavyweight Champ.* Like Capcom's *Street Fighter* it makes you get physically involved in the action in a way no game has ever done before. Sega's new boxing game deserves the word simulation more than anything else, because it asks that you box. The cabinet is a huge robotic looking thing with a swivel top and two handles extending from the front. Grab them and punch out the opponents in a frenzied bout of pounding. Your fighter stands with his back to you like the Frank Bruno game and will respond to your movements even to the point that when you swivel the cabinet left and right he will shimmy away from the opponents' punches. *Heavyweight Champ* asks you to beat four boxers on the way to the title and then to defend it if you win. The action is fast and exhausting if you manage to stay in the ring for more than a couple fights. Destined to be a classic if the cabinet can take the punishment.



and how few of the actual arcade machines were in use. It seems many of the Japanese prefer to play the gambling machines housed in these places. In the arcades that doesn't mean fruit machines but strip Mah Jong. The game, a sort of lateral dominoes, abounds in Japan and plays on the same lines as many of the rather pathetic strip poker games you can buy for home computers. As you win points a woman, often tied up, often of Western origin, with those stupid great Bambi eyes like Marine Boy had, is forced to reveal various parts of her body. Except when you get down to the nitty gritty so to speak, there's nothing there! Such things are censored in Japan. Comic books may depict rape, and often do, but cannot reveal sexual organs. A strangely hypocritical attitude.

The other great Japanese vice to feed their thirst for gambling is *Pachinko*, a bizarre game which consists of watching dozens of ball bearings tumble down an upright bagatelle-like machine. This is their bingo with prizes for points (points make prizes — even in Japan) and it can be seriously addictive. Give me the fruities any time.

After a day playing Mr Tourist it was time for some work *(good of you to squeeze some in—Ed)* at the show. After a filling breakfast of sausage and egg Mcmuffin at the local McDonald's (no more rock hard eggs for me) I was off on the monorail out of Tokyo to the Ryutsusenta, a giant warehouse on the edge of the city's harbour which housed the 25th amusement show. A swift can of the charmingly named Pocari Sweat (a sort of cheap flat lemonade) to bolster my ion level and I was inside and ready to deal death to any alien, greeb, or beast that might dare cross my path. All these machines on freeplay, it was too much to take in! Any arcade junkie would think they'd died and gone to heaven.

The exhibition was set in two halls and I came upon the smaller of the two first, only to find that it housed two of the biggest names in the amusement business — Taito and Namco. Without pausing to click my trigger finger or do any warm up exercises I pounced upon an unsuspecting *Operation Wolf* and embarked upon a twenty minute orgy of murderous machine gunning to get myself in the mood. You saw my first ever review of the machine last month when it was still hot news in Japan and not yet released here. The other major



Rainbow Islands the Bubble Bobble sequel.

launch on the stand was the *Full Throttle* driving console (*reviewed on page 149*) which has now been released here. What really caught my eye that I hadn't seen before was something that set the tone for the whole show. Called *Cyber Tank* it was a monolithic console that takes the two-player game to the limit.

Such heavily customised units went on to be the cornerstone of the 25th JAMMA Show. This is the answer the amusement business has come up with to its major problem. Like home software, organised piracy poses a massive problem to manufacturers and for them the sums involved are even larger. Bogus copies of games, many from East Asia, have been costing the big boys thousands, if not millions of pounds. It got to a point when people were turning up at a show like the JAMMA or the AMOA in Chicago, buying the memory boards to the latest machines, grabbing the first plane to Taiwan to set up copying the games and churning them out as quickly, and more cheaply, than the arcade companies. The feeling is that the more heavily dedicated the games can be, and the more impressive the cabinets, the harder they'll be to copy. For the arcade owner though that can mean paying out £10,000 for a top-of-the-range *After Burner* unit.

Taito wasn't all mega buck units, there were plenty of standard upright cabinets and sit down cocktail games as well. Apart from the already reviewed *Wardner* there was a military motor bike game called *UAG* or *Unattached Grenadiers*, a two player shoot'em up that puts you in command of a bike faced with the task of penetrating an enemy base to destroy a nuclear arsenal. It's a standard up-the-screen battle with major obstacles at the end of each level and sidecar weaponry to be picked up en route.

It was only the next day after a conversation with Firebird's Colin Fuage that I realised I'd missed something. I'd only gone and

ADES



ignored the sequel to *Bubble Bobble* because of its disgustingly cutsie wootsie name of *Rainbow Islands*. I nearly missed a seriously addictive slice of gaming. I wouldn't be at all surprised if Firebird were in there again after the success of *BB*.

In my haste to get my hands around an *Operation Wolf* I had also managed to miss one of the most ambitious set-ups of the show. Directly opposite Taito Namco had a racing game called *Final Lap* which entailed linking up a string of dedicated consoles in an *eight player* game! It was a display worth some £60,000 and had people queuing all day for a chance to compete in a grand prix. Commentators in driving overalls kept up a running commentary of events on the track as cars skidded off corners and overtook each other.

Final Lap was the focus of Namco's stand, but to the side were several other machines with some unusual sequels to old warhorses. Would you believe *Pac-Man* is back? This time he appears in thrilling 3D in *Pacmania*, whilst *Galaga* returns for more up-the-screen blasting in *Galaga '88*. Otherwise there was another dull *Arkanoid* clone in *Quester*, a tank/helicopter shoot'em up called *Blazer* and a game I'm not sure will make an appearance over here called *Tarosuke's Journey*. It had lots of fat childlike figures running round a fantastic landscape, being rather naughty.

Pausing only to loose a few slugs on an automatic rifle range I made my way into the main exhibition hall filled with the din of hundreds of coin-ops. Where to start? After wandering in an aimless wide-eyed daze for ten minutes I decided it was time to do things methodically.

Jaleco have the have the dubious distinction of remaining in my memory for releasing the sexist shoot'em up *Exerizer*. Nothing on their stand showed any promise, least of all another poor *1942* clone called *Block Buster* and a bizarre game that involved little pigs running around throwing bombs at each other.

Over at Irem it seemed unlikely they would produce anything in the next six months to overshadow *R-Type* (their most successful game since *Kung Fu Master* in '85). In fact their stand had nothing worthy of note bar a disgustingly twee game called *Mr Heli* which didn't even merit a play.

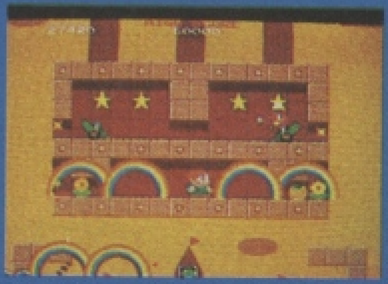
Fortunatley there was solace to be found on the little known Wood Place stand. Their main game was a destoyer/submarine shoot'em up called *The Deep*. Reminiscent of these old depth charge games, *The Deep* ups the stakes with some good graphics and niggly gameplay. One particularly nice section takes you into the arctic circle with a huge submarine lurking at the far end of the screen.

Things really started to look good with the Tatsumi stand opposite which consisted of just one game. Called *Gray Out*, (likely to become *Black Out* if it ever reaches this country) it stakes its place at the forefront of the *After Burner* race. I came away from the console reeling, my eyes wobbling in their sockets. It was time for another can of Sweat.

One of Nichibutsu's biggest ever games was *Terra Cresta* and their stand's arcade hopes seemed to rest solely on a shoot'em up which harked back in name to that previous hit. *Terra Force* has the novelty value of providing the player with the choice of battling through screens of nasties either horizontally or vertically. However its gameplay and backgrounds do little to stop it from being another *Nemesis/R-Type* blast. Ho hum. Show me something *new*.

No chance of that at Capcom with the company that brought you *Commando* and *Ghosts'n'Goblins* demoing two games we've already seen over here *1943* and *Street Fighter*, the tough contact pad game that I can't make my mind up about. My gut feeling is they've missed the boat. A year ago I think it would have been enormous.

What I needed was light relief, a thing that could only be provided by a heavy dose of pinball. Data East's display of arcade machines was largely overshadowed by an explosive new pinball table that boasts digital stereo called *Lazer War*. Twin speakers mounted just above the glass pound out a bruising, frenetic synth beat and urge you on with speech as well. Ramp and steel track, 3 ball multiball and 'laser kick' which blasts your ball back into court just when you think all is lost make *Lazer War* the pinball game of the moment.





GRAY OUT

Jet fighter sims are set to become the vogue with the success of *After Burner* and *Gray Out* is the first to enter into the dogfight. You fly something which resembles an F-16 at the usual eye blurringly fast speed over land and sea blasting every thing in sight. The thing about Gray Out is that it turns out to be more playable than *After Burner*. In my opinion the Sega game is just too difficult and fast to really give you the feeling you're in control. Tatsumi's machine does everything *After Burner* does but you feel you have a chance with it. The graphics are not quite as good but then AB is probably graphically the best game ever produced. Nevertheless, some of the locations you fly through are good. I particularly like the deserted city with its skyscrapers that you must fly between and the desert you fly over in Mission 3. If it ever gets past Sega's lawyers and has a name change *Gray-Out* could well prove a hit.



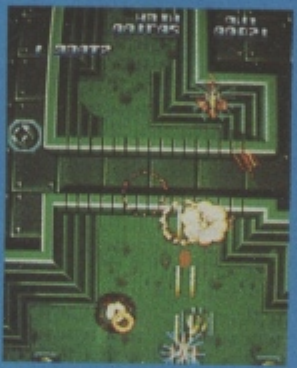

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AJAX

In an attempt to stay up with the big boys Konami entered the console shoot 'em stakes with a semi-*After Burner* clone that had many in two minds. Stage One plays as a horizontal shoot'em up with you controlling a helicopter through a barrage of flak and attack waves. It plays like *Terra Cresta* really and wouldn't have made much of an impression had it not transformed into a 3D fighter game in Stage Two. The graphics put if firmly behind *AB* and *Gray Out,* but nevertheless make the game much more entertaining (if you can get that far). If you can't find an *AB* you might give it a whirl when it arrives.

Data East's arcade games have always been a bit dodgy and there was little to suggest anything was going to change with a strange shoot 'em up based on evolution (which seems a bit contradictory when you think about it) and a new/old licence based on *Ghostbusters* of all things! The game has little to do with Activision's computer hit and didn't play as well either.

Over at Konami I was hoping for something to continue the success of *WEC Le Mans,* but the company had instead plumped for a dedicated console of the shooting variety called *Ajax.* They also had another rather unoriginal game of video pool called *The Hustler* which was saved from complete indifference by a straight-on shot of the balls as well as the normal overhead shot of the table. Nevertheless unless Konami have something up their sleeve they won't be repeating the success of *WEC Le Mans* for a while.

Without Sega things would have been seriously disappointing. I'd have come back on the plane concerned that the trip was a flop and the Ed wouldn't pay for my sushi. But you couldn't miss the Sega stand. It dominated the exhibition hall and it dominated the whole show with not one but several games that confirm its status as the top manufacturer in the world. Two we've seen before in *Afterburner* and *Free Kick* (reviewed this ish), but there was more much more. Biggest and bestest of all was a novel new boxing game that takes the dedicated cabinet to the same limits as Coreland's *Cyber Tank. Heavyweight Champ* is the kind of game that gets you totally involved in the action. So is Sega's *Super League,* a baseball game which not only had superior graphics but also had a little player on the (flat) cabinet that acted as a way of swinging the bat. As the pitcher lets fly you time your moment and whip the figure round in an attempt to smash the ball out of the park.

Among the many *After Burners* and *Heavyweight Champs* was another *Arkanoid* clone this time heavily disguised as a fire fighting game. Since it didn't have a name at the time I can't tell you what it was called, however I can tell you it was very good. You have to rescue a number of people from a blazing house. You do this by bouncing off a trampoline at the right angle to snatch them from the windows and drop down to safety. The trampoline, carried by two burly fireman acts as the bat. Should you fail to catch the bouncing rescuer then it's splat and a life down.

So Sega, Taito and Namco overshadowed everybody else to such a degree that their products ended up looking pretty average. Many games at JAMMA *were* average but many others would have been good enough had *After Burner* not upped the stakes in arcade gaming. Sega meanwhile proved that they have the ability to take things further still.

There were strong rumours that some games had been held back possibly for the AMOA show in Chicago (*Don't even think of asking — Ed*) particularly a follow-up to *WEC Le Mans.* We'll have to wait for news of that, but until then I think there's enough to keep you going. Sayonara!


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ARCADES

FULL THROTTLE

Taito (3 × 10p)

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then Taito's latest driving game, *Full Throttle*, positively *whines* in craven praise of Sega's *Out Run*. The red sports car console may have a slightly different shape, your vehicle is a bit more austere than the carefree Ferrari convertible and the soundtrack lacks the dippy West Coast feel of the original, but nobody's going to be fooled by such cosmetic differences: *Full Throttle* is a clone.

Oh, dear. I seem to have finished my review. And I'm on a per word rate. (*Tell them about the nitro-power button, you fool, I get paid on a per word rate too – irate Deputy Ed*) Oh, yes, there is one other thing. As both of its names (you may also find this game labelled in some places as *Top Speed*) suggest, *Full Throttle* is a fast game. Very fast, in fact, particularly when you make use of the "nitro" button which is located on the side of your gearstick. This button has the same effect as pressing the "turbo" button on *Super Hang On* – you absolutely tear along the streets.

To be fair to *Full Throttle*, this "nitro" button actually saves the game from being an utterly pointless "us-too". The speed really is impressive, sending you hurtling through the cityscapes and countryside. It's recommended that you don't attempt to make use of all this extra thrust when you're taking corners or passing other vehicles – at this kind of pace, your reactions won't be able to cope and you're liable to go spinning off the track.

You're driving against the clock along a long stretch of road which curves and winds through cities, towns and country. It's divided into stages, with a sixty second time limit in which to complete each one. You're going to have difficulty getting past the posts within the time without judicious use of the nitro button, and any more than one collision is likely to delay you fatally.

The graphics are just about up to the standard one expects on these climb-into driving games, though it would have been nice if the programmers could have come up with something a little more spectacular for when you crash – you usually just spin to a halt or turn one somersault before being plonked back on the road to restart. Whatever happened to flames, explosions and scolding girl friends?

Nope, they certainly didn't overtax their imaginations in Taito Towers when they came up with this one. If you're looking for a car game with wit, originality and a brilliant soundtrack, you're better off saving your fifty pees for *Out Run*. But if you're loaded and just happen to fancy a blast of sheer speed, *Full Throttle* may keep you off the streets – for a few minutes, at any rate.



▲ Belt through the eerie streets . . .



. . . out into the countryside.

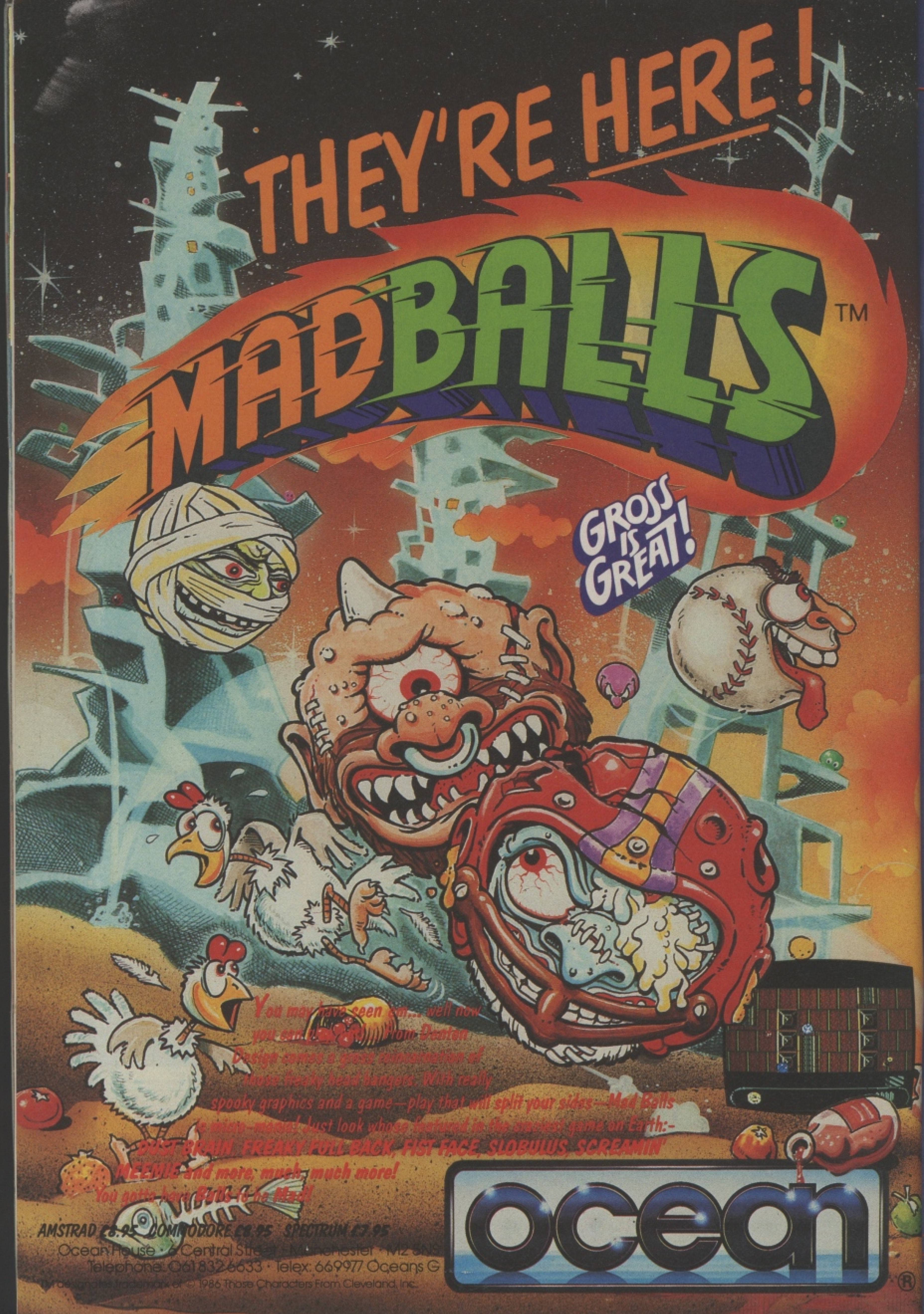


Head through the tunnel . . .



◀ . . . and out towards the desert.

GRAPHICS:	5
SOUND:	5
TOUGHNESS:	7
ENDURANCE:	4
VALUE:	6
OVERALL:	5


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Level Two and Spurs fans form a protective wall.

FREE KICK

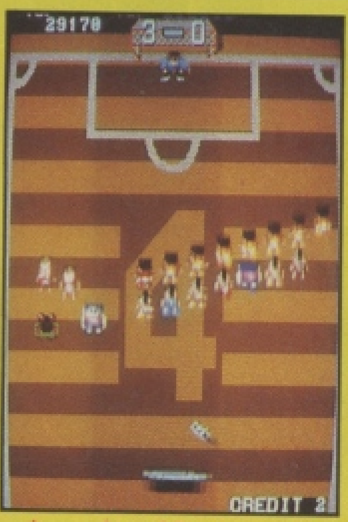
Taito (2 × 10p)

As Mike "Bites Yer Legs" Pattenden will tell you, I am not generally considered to be one of the world's living experts on the game of Association Football. So, as you can imagine, sharing an office with the motley assortment of deranged West Ham, Bristol City, Rovers and QPR supporters (collectively known as "The Vicious Hooligan Thugs Of Death") that inhabit these parts can be a lonely and depressing experience for a sensitive man who until very recently was under the mistaken impression that Hoddle 'n' Waddle was the latest dance craze to sweep the Junior Infant music appreciation scene.

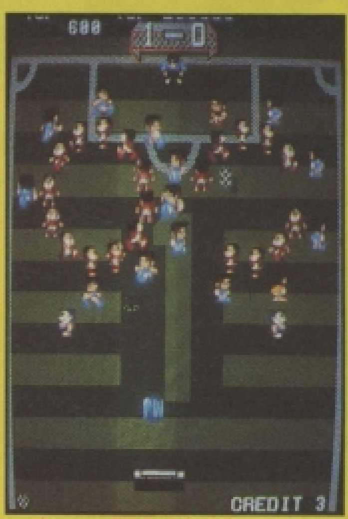
But now, at last, I have something to console me in my ignorance: I may not know much about soccer, but I know more than the programmers of *Free Kick*. I mean, whoever heard of soccer teams of twenty-six players playing against one solitary player with a goal mouth four times as large as the opponents'? And whoever heard of a goalie exclaiming a mere "gees" when beaten? But enough of this hair-splitting: *Free Kick* may fall down a bit on the soccer detail, but its match performance is well up to scratch.

Free Kick is on first appearances a fairly sophisticated *Arkanoid* copy. You control a bat at the bottom of the screen with which you bounce a small football up at a bunch of moving soccer players — except that instead of rushing about the place willy nilly and hacking strikers down just on the edge of the box, these lads perform what can only be described as synchronised swimming impersonations, marching around the pitch in an impressively symmetrical display.

You've got to hit each of them twice to get rid of them. All except two of the blighters, that is: this midfield pair are indestructible, and send any ball that comes their way speeding back to you, usually at a tricky angle after a confusing one-two between themselves. If you let the ball past you you're a goal — and a life — down.



Level Four and the opposition bring on a mole.



Pick up the counter for added bat power.

But there's more. Although you can, if you're a dull plodder type, clear the screen of all the little footballers (except the two indestructibles) in order to move on to the next screen, you can also jump the gun by scoring goals.

There's a goal at the top of the screen, you see, guarded by a beefy goal-keeper. If you manage to get the ball past him into the back of the net, a cheer goes up and the goalie grumbles the sporting, if ungrammatical, message "Good Shoot"! If you manage to score one more "shoot" than the number of the screen you're on (i.e. score two goals on level 1, three goals on level 2, etc.) then you immediately move on to the next screen, and another match with a different arrangement of players.



What a tacky ground — must be White Hart Lane.

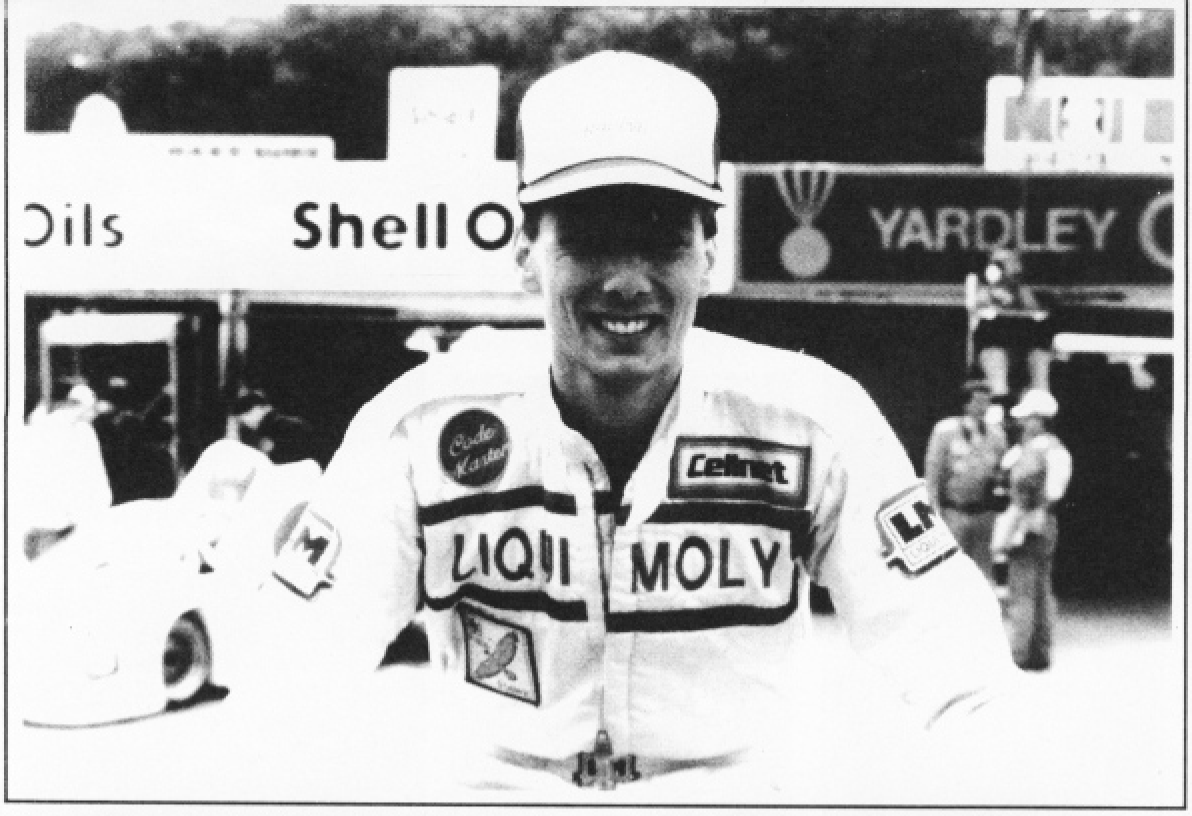
You're unlikely to be able to score towards the start of each level while the pitch is cluttered up with other players, but as the game wears on and your opponents thin out, you have a better chance of an unobstructed shot. It's then that you can try out one of *Free Kick*'s neatest features — the trick shot! By pressing fire while waggling the bat control you can guide the ball's movement *after* it's left your bat. This means that, with practice, banana shots and even the occasional googlie can be utilised to wrong-foot the goalie and score.

There are also a couple of other cute little details thrown in to keep you guessing. Every so often through the other side runs a lone member of your "team": if you manage to "pass" the ball to him, he'll do his damndest to Lineker it past the keeper. You are also awarded the occasional free kick, when the pitch is cleared to allow you one clean shot at goal. And finally there's a mole who sometimes pokes his head up in the middle of the pitch, deflecting your well-aimed shot back towards your own goal line.

Yes, Brian, but what does it all mean? Well, it's not exactly football, but it is a seriously fab game. It's got all the addictiveness of *Arkanoid*, and far more charm. Yup, this is where I'm going to be getting my kicks this season.

Nick Kelly

GRAPHICS:	7
SOUND:	7
TOUGHNESS:	7
ENDURANCE:	9
VALUE:	9
OVERALL:	8



ARCADES PIT STOP

JOHNNY DUMFRIES INTERVIEWED

"Woahhhhhaaarrggghhh! That was close!" Johnny Dumfries takes his hand from his eyes and to his great relief finds that the taxi driver has missed the young lad who dashed in front of him. He had a good try but the kid was too quick.

We're on the way to London's Family Leisure arcade centre so that the racing driver can have a spin on some of the superb driving machines in there.

We settle uneasily back in our seats after the near miss and discuss racing. Johnny Dumfries, the Earl of Dumfries to you, has been racing since 1980 when he started, like many drivers, in 100cc karts. By 1983 he was racing in Formula 3, and a year later he had won the British Championship. It was only a matter of time before he turned to Formula 1 and in 1985 he signed for Ferrari before going on to partner Ayrton Senna on Lotus. A year later he was unceremononiously dropped from the team to make way for inexperienced Japanese driver Nakajima. Is he bitter about that?

"No not really, it's just one of those things. It was no reflection on me, Honda were supplying the engines and they wanted a Japanese driver."

Ah, yes Honda. They have a particularly bad name in this country after their machinations with Nigel Mansell. There were suggestions that they tampered with Mansell's engine to stop him winning the World Championship. Would they stoop to this?

"Oh yes, definitely! There are no scruples in Formula 1. I'm not saying they did of course, there's no way of telling, but it's easily done. It's even possible for the engine management technicians to control aspects of the car from the pits.

Why should they want to do that when only Williams were capable of winning the championship?

"Well Piquet went to Williams from Brabham on Honda's request. He already had two Championships under his belt and it represented more kudos to win again, especially since he has now signed for Lotus who still have their engines next year.

"Mansell was desperately unlucky not to win it anyway, he had some terrible luck."

Dumfries could have returned to the Grand Prix scene next year. "I had a few offers, but I've signed instead for Jaguar and I'm going for the World Sports Car Championship instead."

He's also working for Codemasters advising them on the batch of racing games they have planned, the first of which is *Grand Prix Simulator*. The budget company claim they are going for arcade quality on future 16 bit releases. So we're on the way to an arcade to put his skills to the test on some of the very machines Codemasters want to try to emulate.

We start out with *Out Run*. Dumfries climbs into the machine and assumes a very serious posture. The Ferrari hand-brake turns on the line and he's away speeding through the traffic like he's played it a hundred times before, negotiating that whiplash bend before the end of the first stage with consumate ease. Stage two follows and he opts for the stone collonades which whip towards you at blurringly fast speed. Then, disaster! His eyes go funny and wallop, he hits one. Seconds later and he's done it again and run out of time before the second section.

"That's fantastic I never realised they had machines that could do that now. I've seen those old ones like *Pole Position*, but that's incredible and it's funny too."

We shift over to the WEC Le Mans console. "Now I have seen this one. I saw it at the Motor Show. It's extremely impressive, the cars look just like the real thing, and I love the way it changes from day to night."

He climbs into the machine and punches the start button and begins to weave his way through the back markers, hands at a copybook ten-to-two. He's well into the third stage when disaster strikes. He hits a kerb, overcorrects and goes into a body roll that sends the console whirling around wildly.

"That was a bit violent — but it's a brilliant game."

I lead him over to *Super Hang On* and whack a fifty pee in. I go first and put in my normal average-to-poor effort. Dumfries takes over and powers through level one stabbing the turbo button in all the right places.

"I like the way they've added this button, it's like the boost knob on a Formula 1 car."

Shortly though his effort ends in a ball of flames as his dazed rider crawls away from the wreck.

"That's brilliant, better than the other bike game," he says pointing at an old *Hang On*. "I love the way the bike banks, it's very authentic. I'm also a bit of a bike fan, I used to ride them when I was younger."

Which game does he rate the best?

"Well they're all very, very good, but I have to go for *Out Run* because of the way the console tips, it's more realistic than the circular effect of *WEC Le Mans*. They're definitely all tougher than the real thing."

With that we shake hands. Johnny Dumfries draws a deep breath and takes his life in someone else's hands by heading off for a taxi.



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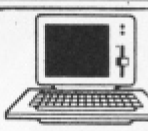
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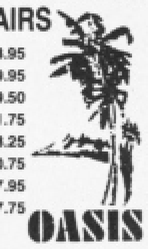
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ADVERTISEMENT INDEX



MEGA-WINNER

With an Amiga A500 up for grabs we prepared the office for the onslaught. Entries were everywhere — in people's drawers (oo-er), Mike's Branston pickle jar, Kelly's guitar case, the Ed's executive toilet. You couldn't move for them. What a relief to judge them. The lucky winner was one Christian Panami of Luton who suggested that Freddy Krueger from 'Nightmare on Elm Street' would make a good Amiga game. Although I was sorely tempted to announce Mike Pattenden as the winner with the suggestion of 'Lovejoy' as a computer game.

WATCHING THE WILDLIFE

Make us laugh and you'll get a Sony Watchman, was what we asked in our RED LED compo. Smut and sick came in by the ton with the usual barrage of entries. Some were pretty good as it happens, loads about mother Kelly's socks too. But the overall winner was Don Homer of Halesowen West Midlands. Twenty-five runners-up each receive a copy of Red L.E.D, but you'll want to hear the joke first:

I'm afraid to say Mike Pattenden is spoiled."

"How dare you". said Eugene,

"Mike is not spoiled".

"Have it your own way, but at least come and see what the steamroller's done to him".

(Well I thought it was funny and I judged it — Nick Kelly)

Craig Webster, Rubery, Birmingham; Philip Grant, Renfrewshrie, Scotland; J Richardson, Chelmsford, Essex; C Oakley, Stourbridge, West Midlands; Chi Kwong Chiu, Shiremoor, Newcastel Upon-Tyne; Samantha Kingsbury, Barry, South Wales; Martin Nunn, St Albans Herts, Asay Sood, Coventry; Cheryl Beeby, Kettering, North Hants; R Kirten, Coventry West Midlands; Anish Patel St Mellons, Cardiff; Thomas Mitchell, Clyde Bank, Glasgow; Kevin Urton, Totton, Southampton; Ewen Willow, Skere, Aberdeen; Dai Teague, Caerleon Gwent; Mathew Thomas, Southampton; Paul Singh, London; Malcolm Dickson, Boston, Lincolnshire; Darren Calpin, Ware, Herts, Steven Williamson, Wirral, Merseyside; Dennis Sherwood, London; D W Norman, Chiswick, London; F T Burger, Hungerford; Nick Sir Bradford; A Lennox, Leyton-Buzzard.

WEIRDEST WINNERS

If you can cast your mind back to those balmy days of September you might remember the California Games compo where we asked you to name the sport belonging to the move. Well S B Woods of Carlton, Goole came up with the correct answers to win the complete Games Kit of a surfboard, roller skates, BMX, frisbee etc. Ten runners up will each receive T-shirts and copies of the game: Andrew Haughton, Hornchurch, Essex; Phillip Miller, North Yorkshire; Mark Winter, Maidstone, Kent; Neil Roscoe, Chorley, Lancs; Matt Lowe, Little Neston, South Wirral; Paul Bacon, Stonebroom, Derby; Mark Herbert, Syston, Leicester; Simon James, Marlow Bottom, Bucks; John Sparks, Whitnash, Leamington Spa; Robert Webb, High Wycombe, Bucks.

Copies of the game go to: David Connor, Aintree, Liverpool; Warren Pearch, Milford, Derby; Adam Smith, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs; E Gould, Willsbridge, Bristol; Chris Raynham, Belpher, Derbys, Joseph Gill, Handsworth, Birmingham; Karl Partridge, Forestfach, Swansea; M Luckhurst, Croydon, Surrey; S Cornish, Exmouth, Devon; Lindsay Powell, Linlathen, Dundee; Andrew Fiddy, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks; Ben Webber, Goatacre, Wilts; James Allen, Chichester West Sussex; A Brightman, Ashford, Kent; I Luje, Pentire, Cornwall; Adrian Hemsley, Portslade, Sussex; Craig Ross, Clifton, York; Mrs L Wood, Bakewell, Derbyshire; Sean Clarke, London; Gareth Harper, Londonderry, N Ireland; Tommy Taylor, Romford, Essex; Mark Rendle, Maldon, Essex; Philip Grant, Renfrewshire, Scotland; P N Woodruff, Margate, Kent; Duane Smith, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs; W Meredith, Leeds; Barry Warburton, Spalding, Lincs; Mark Rodgers, Tingly, Wakefield; Russel Goodwin; Sunbury, Middx; Mathew Leuw, Norwich.

KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES

A year's supply of US Gold games, for nothing. With all the excellent licences coming out in the next twelve months this was a great prize. And that's not mentioning all the games not yet announced or even conceived. The runners up also do well out of the compo with a free copy of Indiana Jones to add to their collection.

We asked you to come up with a name for the new Indy film the winning title of 'Indiana Jones and the city of the Celibate Monks' (!) was sent in by Paul Thomas from St Helier, Jersey. *(who judged this!? Ed)* With the hundreds and hundreds of titles to decide from choosing the twenty-five runners up was no cake walk with titles like 'A day out on Sahara Beach with the, Joneses' either. Still we did it had here they are: Arun Malhotra, Wembley, Middx; Ralph Currie, Kincardineshire, Scotland; Richard Haynes, Camberley, Surrey; Dennis Sherwood, Carnin Town, Surrey; Brent Patterson, Sheffield, Simon Borbas, Luton; S Ward, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands; Anthony Laws, Stockton, Cleveland; Joe Talbot, Swindon, Wilts; Nick Gianferrari, Altrincham, Cheshire; James H Clerk, Glasgow; Trevor Fox, Thetford, Norfolk; Gavin Twigg, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands; M Clery, Redditch, Worcs; F Viney, Caterham, Surrey; Gerald McLaughlin, Glencolmcille, Co. Donegal; Lee Fellows, Birmingham; Mike Gordon, Belfast; Fred Humtly-Smyth, London; J Cope, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs.

OURNUT!

Just for a tease we asked you to work out what Ournut was. And you all said Outrun. (Fact: this is the first CU Compo no-one got wrong) So out of the hat we picked John Jones form Hastings, East Sussex, who wins a morning with an *Afterburner* machine. Just him and a mate. And after that lunch with the CU crew, what a lucky chap (*they haven't seen us eat. Ed*). We fancy eating sheeps eyes pickled in bats blood served with a side dish of centipede marinated in cockroach oil. What about you lads?

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST

The number of the beast...

It seems that we have quite a lot of headbangers reading CU. Either that or Iron Maiden are amazingly popular. The prizes, if you can remember, were a complete autographed set of Maiden albums, with five runners up prizes of their newest album "Somewhere in time" also autographed by Brucie.

The winner of the set was Dan Ihrelius from Sweden — we take no responsibility for years Dan. And the runners-up were; V Napolitano, Slough, Berks; Gareth Maybury, Burnley, Lancs; Nik Kryhunivsky, Plymouth Devon; Roy Saimi, Wolverhampton; Miss E E Hilton, Mossley, Ashton-Under-Lyne.

BANGING ME HEAD

We asked for a totally original name for a heavy metal band. We asked for the answers on an oily denim. And oily denim was about what we got. So thanks and commiserations are in order to Ian Bucklow, Marc Holms and Lee Vickers. Good of you to send in such oily denim we're but sure, you were beaten by a highly original and extremely silly name "The Skreamin' Armpits from Marz.' Which means congratulations are in order for F Bissett from Southgate, London. Who wins a totally awesome Rastan-in-a-suitcase machine. You lucky dog, you!



NEXT MONTH

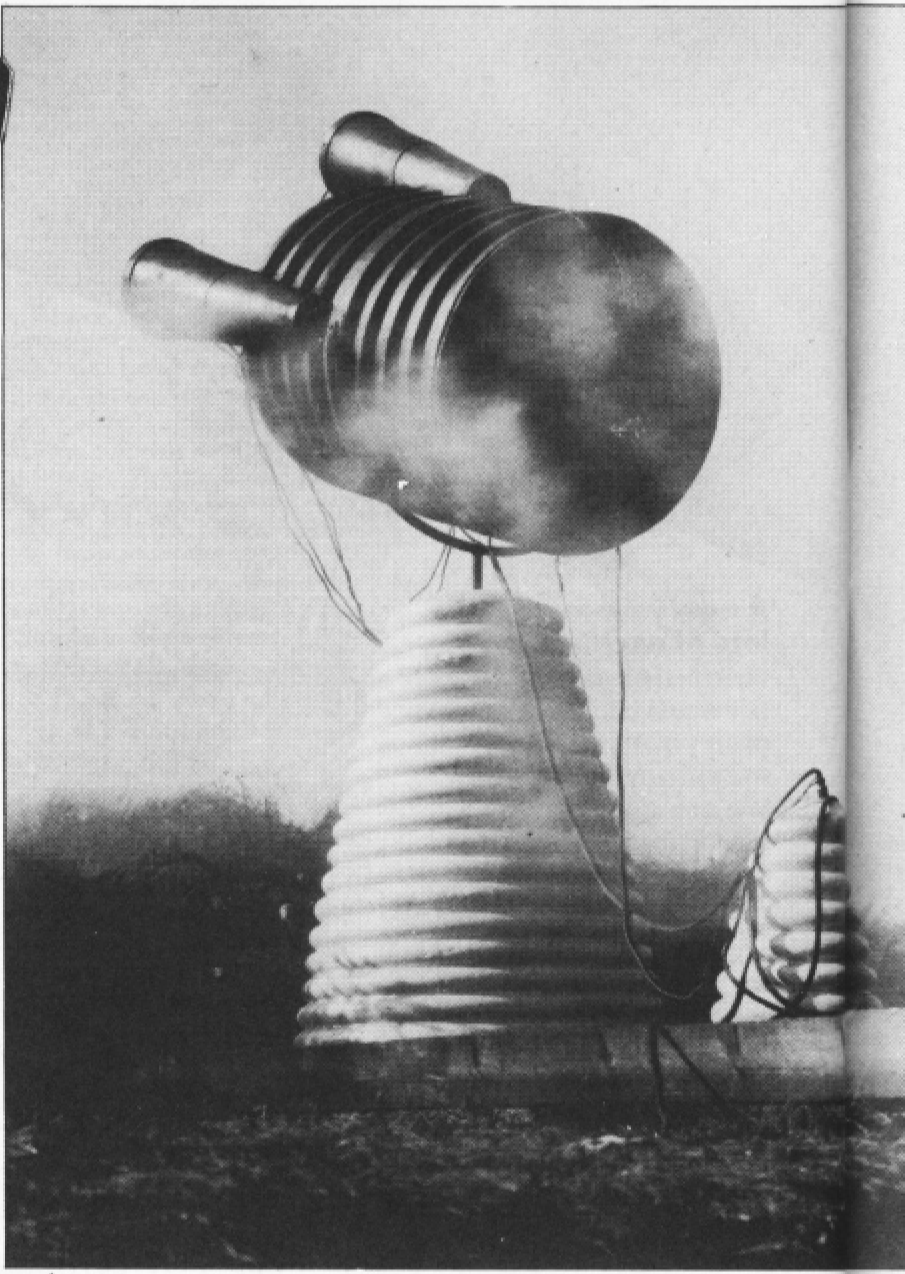


A new year looms with lots of exciting computer games to look forward to. To help you plan your year for maximum enjoyment we are giving away a giant poster calendar called *The Arcade At The End of The Universe*, stuffed full of futuristic coin-op entertainment. The CU crew are also secreted (*sounds rude — Ed*) somewhere in the poster. Spot 'em if you can and win a super prize. CU itself will be another whopper — no less than 164 pages guaranteed with all the latest game reviews and previews including *Stealth Fighter*, *Basil the Great Mouse Detective* and *Out Run*. The best value in gamesdom at just £1. Place an order at your newsagents now.

CU NEXT MONTH

ON SALE CHRISTMAS WEEK

Tommy's Tips



Tommy repels another barrage of readers' queries.

Resets

I am thinking of buying a 'reset switch' so that I can save my tape games to disk. I have seen a cheap one (about £5.00) that would seem perfect. I would however like a question answered. Once I have reset the game will I be able to save it or will the program have something in it to stop anyone from copying?

Recently, though, I have spotted a cartridge (about £22.00) that claims it will copy games with no problem and will re-load at a faster speed. Some of these have other utilities including sprite disablers and Centronics interfaces all built in. The second question therefore is do these reset switches and cartridges really work and if so, is is best just to buy a reset switch on its own or to buy one of these cartridges for £20 plus?

Your help is appreciated.
N. J. Dawson,
Tunbridge Wells

Just buying a reset switch is a waste of money, since you could make one for about 50p and it still wouldn't allow you to save games to disk unless they are totally unprotected. If that is the case you can just load them in and then save them to disk anyway, without having to do a reset. Of course, after doing a reset, even on a protected program, you could always spend many 'happy' hours trying to find all the bits of code in memory that make up the game and save all the chunks to disk (or just save the whole memory – bit wasteful though!), but I really don't think it's worth the effort.

As for the cartridges, these are very useful if you have a large slow loading game which you want on disk. They often include their own turbo disk load and this can give substantial speed improvements when re-loading. If you have a lot of games you want to transfer to disk for back-up and ease of loading then it may be worth while getting a cartridge, but if it's only for one or two games then you will have to weigh the cost against the advantages they offer.

Tasword

I am writing to ask a question about the Commodore MPS 803 printer. How do you get different character sets to print out, eg. using the TASWORD 64 word processor, characters like ITALICS, CONDENSED, DOUBLE STRIKE etc. Your help would be appreciated.
S. Morris,
Worcester

Your problem is that the printer as it stands is not capable of all these things. Some limited enhancements to the text such as double strike are possible by embedding ASCII codes into the commands sent by the WP program to the printer, but there is not much else. However a comparatively new item has been released for the 803 that will allow you to do all these things, and more. It is called PRINTKIT IV and gives you true descenders, italics, bold printing and single pass underlining. It is a hardware upgrade, fitting inside the printer, and because of this it actually speeds up the printing rate, rather than slow it down like the software conversions. The commands for the extra facilities can all be used within TASWORD and the upgrade costs £30 all inclusive. For further details contact Avon Printer Technology, Swindon House, 4 Howard Road, Southville, Bristol BS3 1QH, or tel 0272 667167.

Disk speeds

I am considering buying a CBM 128 and I wondered what is the speed difference between the 1570 and 1571 Disc Drives and also the speed difference between the 1541 and the 1571. I also wondered if a 1541 and a disc turbo would be better than a 1570/1571, and what is the best disc turbo?
J. Taylor,
Huddersfield

There is no speed difference at all between the 1570 and the 1571; the difference is one of capacity. The 1570 is a single sided drive giving 170 kbytes, while the 1571 is a double sided drive giving 340 kbytes. Both of these disks are designed for fast use with the CBM 128. The 1541 on the other hand is a slow drive by comparison and is designed for use with the 64 (although it will work quite happily with the 128).

As for disk turbos, these are intended to make the best of a bad job of the 1541 with the CBM 64 and are a slight compromise between speed and total compatibility with regards to the software that can be loaded at the higher speed. Also, a 1541 plus a decent turbo system will cost you more than a 1570. For value for money, and if you don't really need 340 kbytes all at the same time, go for the 1570.

Light bulb

I have a few questions to ask you.
(1) I can light a bulb by connecting it to pin 7 and to pin 8, but I want to know a program than when I press 'F' it will flash and if I press 'F' again it will turn off and if I press 'L' it will light up. By the way I connect the bulb to a joystick port and I don't mind which joystick port I have to use. Also I want to know how to restore a "NEW'ED" program.
(2) I would like to know a program to change error messages, start up messages and Basic instructions.
(3) Last but not least, I would like to know how a reset switch for pokes works and how can I have the same effect with wires. I tried to connect pins 1 and 3 of the user port but that does a cold start. Please help me. Thank you!
Majed Sabir,
Huddersfield

I know it is fun to experiment with your



ries.

computer, but you should be extremely careful before connecting thinks like light bulbs to ANY port. Getting it wrong can be a very expensive business! You cannot control the voltage to pins 7 and 8 on the joystick ports because pin 7 is connected directly to +5v and pin 8 is connected to 0v; in other words they act just like the contacts on a battery. The problem is that the current is limited to 50mA, which will be exceed at the moment of initial connection of a 6v bulb. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONNECT THE BULB TO ANY OTHER PINS OR YOU COULD DAMAGE THE COMPUTER.

As for changing the BASIC error messages, this involves copying the BASIC ROM into RAM and then you can alter whatever you like. I don't have room here to give you a program to do all you want, but I recommend you buy one of the reference books such as Raeto West's 'Programming the Commodore 64' if you want to try all those things out for yourself.

I assume by a 'reset switch for POKEs' you mean one of the 'freeze' cartridges that allow you to break into running programs to make changes or save them. The way they work is to divert the interrupts and they can thus effectively stop the computer at any time, running their own program before returning control to the normal operating system again. Because this is all done in software, there is no simple way to reproduce the effect with wires. You are correct when you say that connecting pins 1 & 3 gives a cold start, but even that does not destroy m/code programs. In fact it is possible to recover even a BASIC program after a cold start, since it is only the pointers that are reset. A reference book is obviously a must for you since that can explain all these things in much more detail than I have room for here.

Experimental sound

● **I've been doing some sound-experiments on the C-64, and now I'm just wondering: How do you read the signals coming from the "audio in" plug? I'd be pleased if you would tell me.**
Dag Edwardsen,
Honëfon, Norway

As far as I am aware there is no way to 'read' the signals coming into the audio in pin on the audio/video socket. What the input is for is to enable you to mix sound signals generated on other devices with the sound generated by the SID chip. For example you could control a tape recorder to give language lessons through the TV speaker, with the volume etc controlled by the computer. You could also have a game using two computers linked together in different rooms where you could each hear the sound effects from the other computer as well as your own. The audio input can be fed through the filters as well to give extra effects.

One thing you must ensure is that the electrical input to the audio line is correct otherwise you could cause damage to the SID chip. The input impedence is approximately 100 kΩ, with an input signal level of not greater than 3 volts peak to peak on a 6 volt referenc level. You may also require AC-coupling capacitors to avoid interference. If all this is double-dutch then I would recomment you proceed with extreme caution before connecting anything to the audio-in line, otherwise try inputting sound from a mic, or a guitar etc.

Quick flash

● **I have typed in an M/C screen flash routine. It flashes the screen allright, but I can't load a program while the screen is flashing. Please help. Here is the program:**

```
10 REM C64 FLASH ROUTINE
20 DATA 169, 0, 141, 60, 3, 174,
60, 3, 189, 63, 200, 172, 64, 3,
192, 2, 240, 3, 141, 32, 208
30 DATA 192, 1, 240, 3, 141, 33,
208, 32, 56, 200, 232, 224, 16,
208, 228, 206, 61, 3, 173, 61
40 DATA 3, 208, 212, 173, 62, 3,
240, 6, 206, 62, 3, 76, 0, 200, 96,
172, 63, 3, 136, 208, 253
50 DATA 96, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9,
0, 13, 14, 10, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13
60 FOR I=51200 TO 51279:
READ X: POKE I, X: NEXT
80 PRINT CHR$ (147), CHR$ (5)
90 NC=10000: DE=36: FL=3:
GOSUB 150
100 END
150 POKE 830, INT (NC/256):
POKE 829, NC-PEEK (83) *256:
POKE 832, FL
160 POKE 831, DE: SYS51200
170 RETURN
```

You can change the variables if you want.
NC is the number of loops;
DE is a delay between 1 and 255;
FL is the flag for what to flash (1-border; 2-screen; 3-both.
Chris Ward,
Northampton

There is nothing wrong with your flashing program, except that you cannot just load a program while running it. The LOAD routine has to work to a precisely timed sequence, which is why the screen is normally disabled when loading is taking place. Diverting the interrupts, or doing anything else which changes the timing is guaranteed to give problems when trying to use the built-in loader.

The way the software houses do it is to write their own loader routine as well, so that they control the timing within the code. I'm afraid that writing a routine to flash the screen is the relatively easy bit, writing a loader/saver routine is a little more complicated. If you want to disassemble the ROM listing, the LOAD PROGRAM routine starts at F49E and ends at F5AE.

Pen problem

● **We have a Plus/4 Computer for which we bought a 1520 Printer. We can't get the pens for the printer locally. Can you suggest how I can get the pens? We use the printer for our bills as my husband has his own business. We also do our V.A.T. returns on it. The pens are urgently needed. Help.**
Ginny Hobbs,
Gillingham

TOMMY'S TIPS

Tommy's Tips

If you can't get the pens from your local Commodore dealer then try your local Tandy dealer. Tandy do a plotter which uses identical pens and they are also cheaper than the Commodore pens. Your nearest Tandy centre will be O&J House on the Upper Shaftsbury Road, Blandford (tel: Blandford 53737). Other Tandy shops near you are POOLE (86 High St), BOURNEMOUTH (132 Commercial Road) and BATH (3 The Mall).

Wrong number

● I have written a telephone program which searches for a phone number which corresponds with the users' name input, but I would also like to include a section where the user enters a name and its corresponding number and then the information is saved on the previous telephone number cassette in data statements. I would be very happy if you could help me. (I am not writing in machine-code). Also which is better to buy—a 1541 disk drive for £199.00 or a 1570 double disk drive also for £199.00? I would be glad if you could help me with this information and I am looking forward to your reply.
A. Rispoli,
Herts

What you are proposing is not impossible, but it is extremely inefficient, since you effectively have to resave the entire program every time you add one name. What you should be doing is to store the names and addresses in a data file which you then read into an array in the program. This way, the data only takes up space once, as array elements, but if you store it as data statements then you are storing it twice; once as a "string" in the program and again as string variables (or in an array) in order to use it in the program. The way to save and load data into a program is shown in the small example at the end. By using a separate tape you can add as many names as the computer can hold in memory.

As for a disk drive, you don't say which computer you have. If it's 64 then the 1541 (or 1541C) is the correct drive, although the Excelerator+ from Evesham Micros is also designed for the 64 and only costs £160. If you have a 128 then get the 1570 since it is much faster than the 1541 (but *only* when used with the 128). The 1570, by the way, is only a single sided drive with the same 170 kbyte capacity as the 1541. It is the 1571 that is the double sided drive for the 128.

```
 10 DIM NAME$(5)
 20 REM INPUT AND STORE
 30 FOR LP = 1 TO 5
 40 INPUT "NAME", NAME$(LP)
 50 NEXT LP
 60 OPEN 1,1,1, "NAMES"
 70 FOR LP = 1 TO 5
 80 PRINT#1, NAME$(LP)
 90 NEXT LP: CLOSE 1
100 REM READ FROM TAPE
110 OPEN 1,1,0, "NAMES"
120 FOR LP = 1 TO 5
130 INPUT#1, NAME$(LP)
140 PRINT NAME$(LP)
150 NEXT LP: CLOSE 1
160 END
```

Student

● I am a student currently doing computer studies and have found that the 64 is not good enough for this course, therefore I wish to upgrade to the Amiga now that the price has been reduced. Where I live there are no stores that stock the AMiga, so could you please tell me what languages can be used on this machine and whether I need a cartridge in order to use assembly language.
J. Boyce,
Margate, Kent

You have a very wide choice of languages for the Amiga. The following are all available right now, although I have put the prices in brackets just to stop you getting *too* excited: MCC Pascal £90), UCSD Pascal (£ n/k), Lattice C (£130), TDI Modula-2 (£99 or £149), Cambridge LISP (£150), A/C Fortran (£ n/k), alternative BASICs (£70-£100) and APL 68000 (£230!).

There are also a number of assembler programs available for the Amiga: DEVPAC (£60), Macro Assembler by Metacomco (£70) and a rather up-market one called K-Seka from Kuma (£80). There are no cartridges for the Amiga, at least not for software, so everything is loaded in from disk. However, the disks are extremely fast compared to the 1541 so it isn't quite the pain it can be on the 64 when an m/code program 'bombs' the computer and you have to reload the monitor from disk.

Printer problem

● I currently have a CBM 64 and an MPS 803 printer and I am thinking of buying an Amiga 500. Can I still use the 803 printer or will I have to buy a new printer to use with the Amiga? If I can use the MPS 803 will I need an interface or will it just plug in like the 64?
R Fields,
Colehill, Devon

Until very recently I would have said you can't use any of the Commodore 'Serial IEEE' printers with the Amiga. However, TRILOGIC have just come up with a cable and a cartridge for the 64 which will allow you to connect an Amiga to your printer through the 64, giving you the added advantage of a printer buffer by using the 64's RAM memory. The complete package costs £39.95 and it should work with any of the Commodore printers, both dot-matrix and daisy-wheel, although I haven't tried it personally. For further details contact TRILOGIC, Unit 1, 253 New Works Road, Low Moor, Bradford, BD12 0QP, or telephone 0274 691115.

Resolution

● I own a Commodore C16 + 64k and I am just starting to write short machine code routines. Would it be possible for me to program a graphic resolution of 640 × 400 in two colours or just 320 × 200 with perhaps 16 or 4 colours instead of a boring 2 as supplied by Commodore.
Ian Fidler,
Hemel Hempstead

Unfortunately you are stuck with what is basically a 40 column screen which means the maximum resolution you can use is 40×8 pixels horizontally (320) by 25×8 pixels vertically (200). Even something as powerful as the Amiga is limited to 640×200 without going into the 'interlace' mode, with its unfortunate 'flicker' effect, to get 640×400.

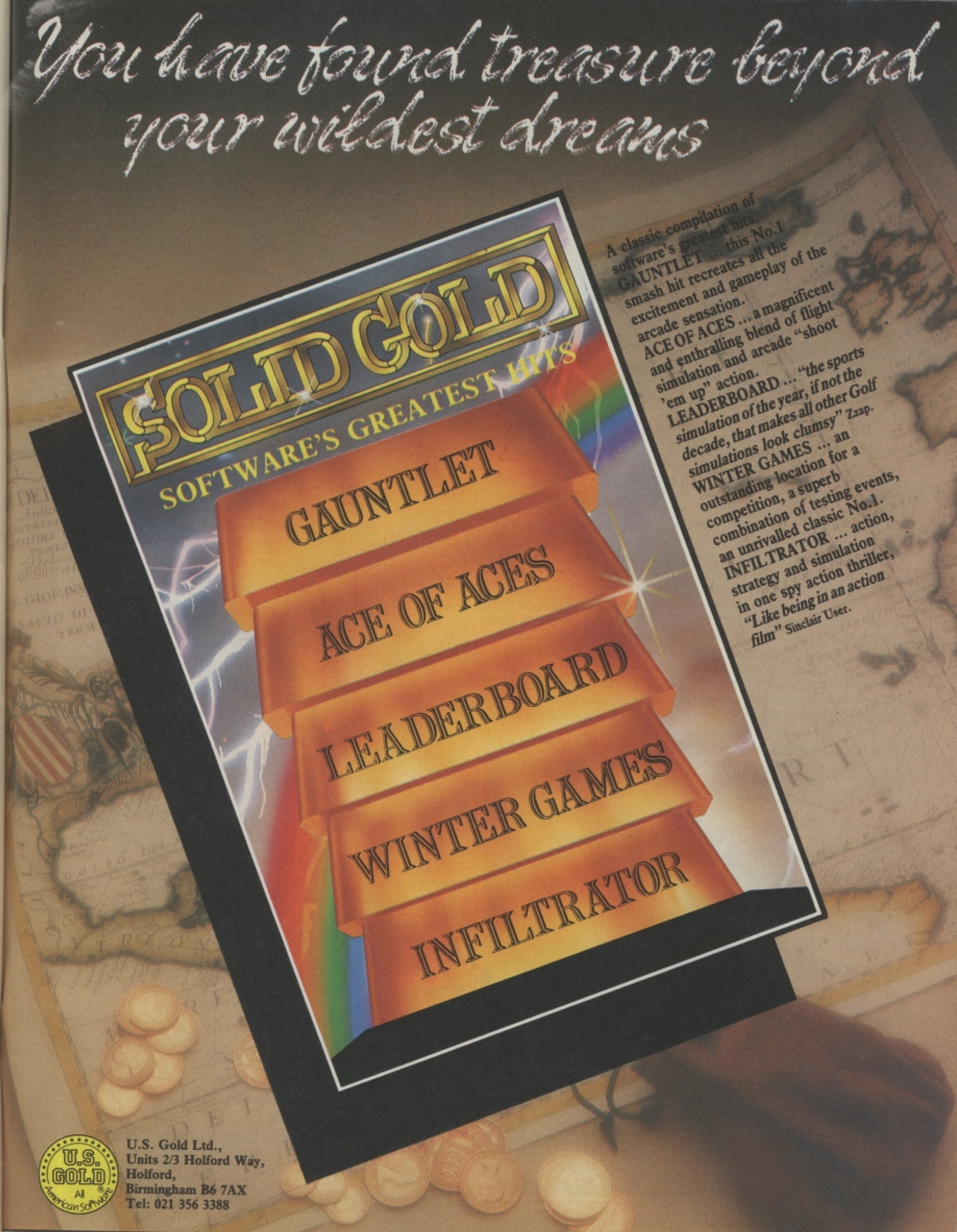
Secondly, you have a problem with the total memory that can be occupied by the screen. With 320×200 you are using nearly 8 kbytes of RAM, i.e. half the normal memory of a C16 with each pixel being either ON or OFF thus representing one of two possible colours. There *is* a way of getting more than 2 colours on the 'hi-res' screen, by using multi-colour mode. However, this has the effect of reducing the effective horizontal resolution to 160 since it now needs 2 bits per pixel to repreesnt one of 4 possible colours on the screen. This means that your objects/drawings have to consist of 'pairs' of pixels, rather than single pixels, in order to still cover the full screen width.

Collision

● I own a C16 computer and when I am trying to create a game with moving graphics in basic I always get stuck at the same part of the program. The part of the program is the part when the computer has to think about whether it has been hit or not. Could you tell me how to make the spaceships etc. sensitive so that when I hit the spaceship in a game it blows up and so that it doesn't when I miss it?
Phillip Bexon,
Shepshed, Leics

There is basically nothing special about "hitting" graphics characters on the screen. Unlike sprites on the 64, or even better the 128, which can register a "collision" with another object, normal characters on the C16 (even ones you have created yourself) have no special properties in this respect. Rather than the computer deciding whether or not the 'spaceship' has been hit, it is up to you, the programmer, to detect the fact and carry out some action. The simple way to do it is to carry out a test within the program so that when the 'bullet' location equals any part of the 'spaceship' location (since the UDG could be greater than one character) then a collision has occured and the program must branch to a 'hit' routine.

The test involves PEEKing the screen location which the 'bullet' is about to occupy and seeing if it contains, for example, ASCII 32 (space) or some other value which represents part of a 'spaceship'. If it is a space then carry on, else you have detected a 'hit'. This test must be included inside the movement loop(s) such that the test is done for each new position of the 'bullet.' You will appreciate that this imposes a considerable delay on the speed of program execution, which is why movement and collision detection is often done in m/code. However, it can be done in BASIC so give it a try.



CBM 64/128
£9.99 TAPE
£14.99 DISK

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£9.99 TAPE

SPECTRUM +3
£14.99 DISK

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Hot Shots

You have to be careful what you say these days, one wrong word and you could end up being pursued by the courts, software houses and big men with iron bars. Maybe it's the time of year but some companies are getting very sensitive.

● Poor lil' **Pop Comp Weekly** found this out to their cost recently when they levelled a rather strange accusation at Elite only to find themselves in receipt of legal looking bits of paper. Wouldn't it have been less embarrassing for all concerned if they hadn't made such a fuss about it??

Now you probably want to know it I'm going to tell you any news for a change. Well I am. How about if I told you someone had fronted the money for

● **After Burner,** Sega's red hot coin-op. If that sounds like a no hope conversion then let me tell you that Firebird are in the running to sign up my personal fave

● **Operation Wolf.** Why do they bother? Are they going to issue an Uzi sub-machine gun with every copy? I'll tell you why they do it because people will go out and buy it regardless. . . . Talking of **Firebird** it's all right for me to slag them now and again because I'm good friends with them — well some of them. So much so that they invite me to their parties occasionally. This happened a few weeks back when I ended up at one of the sales team's flat. It was a good party, not a great party, or at least it wasn't when I left. Apparently it turned into a full-scale riot in the early hours with a black maria being called and police with truncheons wading in to sort the troublemakers. They know how to have a jolly good time over there. . . .

● Someone else who knows how to enjoy himself is **Archer Maclean.** The sport mad programmer is off shortly to try out his latest craze, snow surfing. Whaaat? It's true! It's rather like a cross between surfing and tobogganing. You simply have a small board, take it to the top of a large hill or mountain and er surf down. Next on Archer's list is microlite aircraft. . . .

● Blimey is that all there is? I know, I'll fill the rest of the space with a Tom Green cartoon and a couple of dodgy pictures.

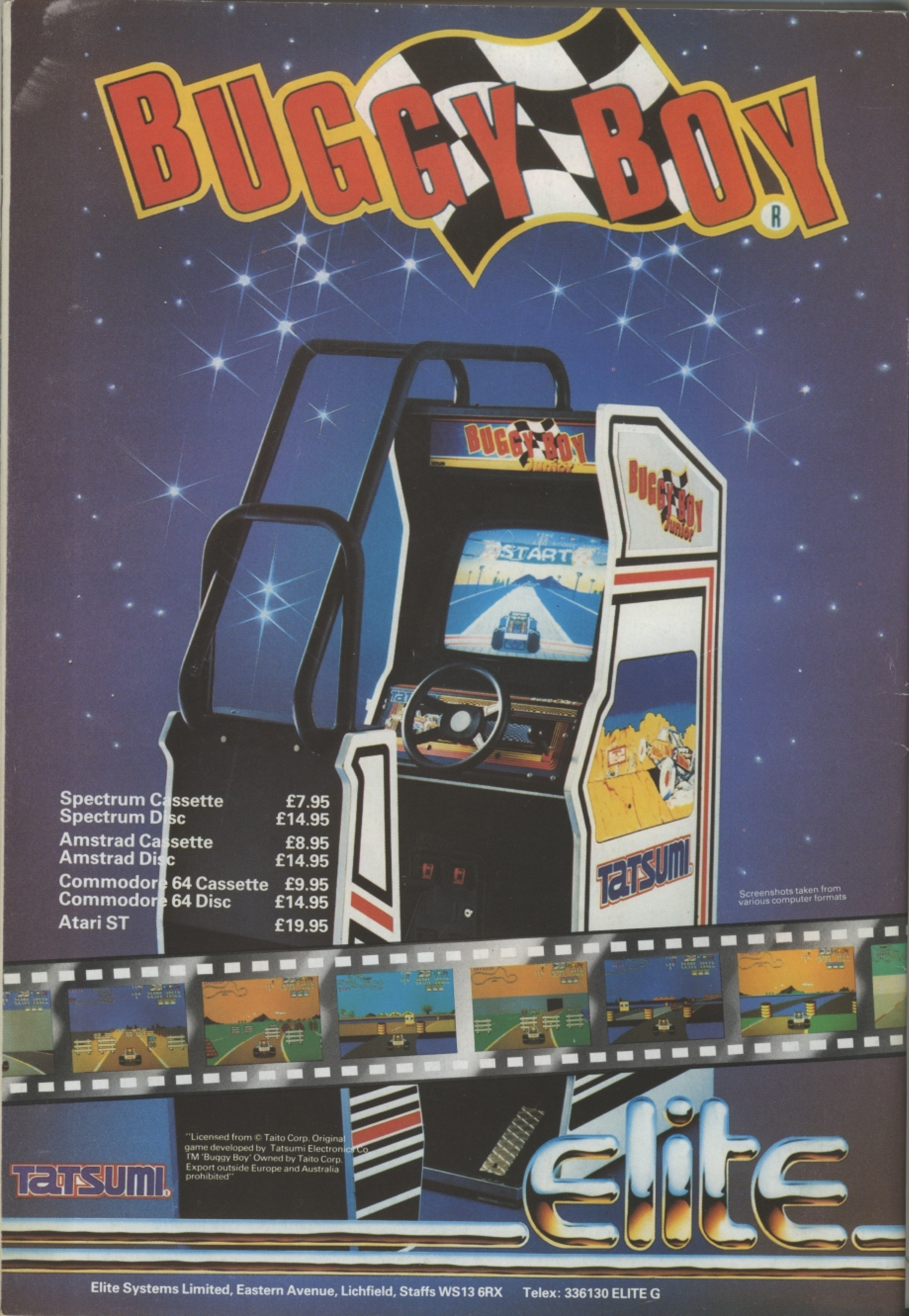




▲ **Old software bosses never die — they just turn up in silly pictures. Ex-Ariolasoft boss Frank Brunger does PA with megastar Postman Pat.**



The Big Ed, Eugene O'Lacey meets Big Ron whilst wearing Johnny suit (handmade in Bangkok High St.) are they both going to make a comeback? ▶



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